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State Of The Game

Morales' Miracle

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## HKO vs. HAYE

The Fight We Have All Been Waiting For

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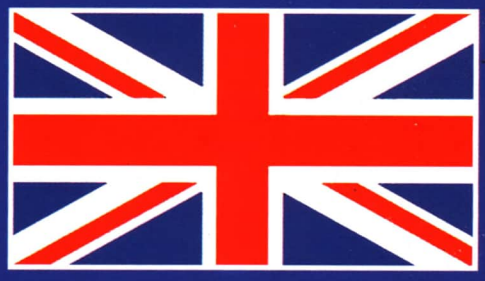

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# Bigger Than You Think

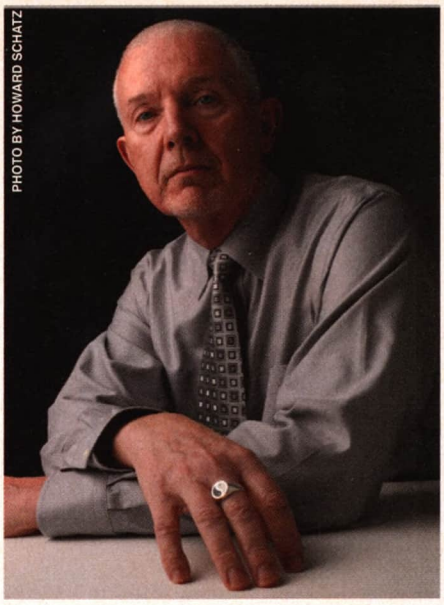
PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

Historical milestones are usually obvious in hindsight but much more difficult to spot in advance. Most of the time, any attempt to label a pending event as being of momentous importance is driven by hubris and therefore doomed to failure.

This is especially true in the world of prizefighting, where hucksters stand on piles of manure of their own making, spouting regurgitated rubbish for the benefit of the uninformed. The most recent example was the lemming-like media chorus proclaiming that the Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya match in 2007 was the "Fight To Save Boxing."

The morning after the decidedly uneventful encounter, most of the same folks who had saddled the fight with such a profound responsibility declared boxing was dead because the fight failed to thrill. The fact that it was—and remains—the richest fight in boxing history was conveniently overlooked because it didn't fit the stale storyline.

Consequently, it is with a measure of trepidation that I suggest that the upcoming bout between world champion Wladimir Klitschko and challenger David Haye is the most significant heavyweight fight since Lennox Lewis put to rest the myth of Mike Tyson in 2002.

It's not the fight to save boxing, not even the fight to save heavyweight boxing. But it is the fight that could quite possibly reinvigorate the heavyweight division outside of Eastern Europe, where the Klitschko name already results in packed houses whenever it appears on a fight poster.

Even though one boxer is Ukrainian and the other British, the long-anticipated Klitschko-Haye match could also possibly boost the heavyweight division's profile in the United States, which hasn't produced a quality heavyweight of its own since the turn of the century.

Moreover, outside the participants' homelands, it doesn't really matter who wins. All that is required is an exciting fight with a conclusive ending. It doesn't seem all that much to ask, but when was the last time it happened in a heavyweight championship fight?

According to the majority of 20 experts THE RING polled *(see page 36)*, Klitschko will retain the title. The odds-makers apparently feel the same way. What makes the match so intriguing is that even the people who are picking Wladimir to win agree it's the best heavyweight fight that can be made at this time.

Klitschko's trainer Emanuel Steward says that Haye got the fight with his mouth, and plenty of people would agree. But that's what they said about Cassius Clay before he fought Sonny Liston.

I mention this not to compare Haye with Ali in terms of talent or accomplishments, but rather to remind how easily preconceived notions and consensus of opinion influence us.

Then there's the fact that Haye will bring qualities into the fight that most of Wlad's opponents have lacked. Besides an abundance of athleticism, blazing speed, and big right hand, Haye actually does share a trait legitimately comparable to Ali—massive self-confidence.

Still, the brash Brit will need more than a cheeky swagger to spring an upset. Regardless of who wins, providing the deed is accomplished in a fittingly brutal and comprehensive manner, the spotlight will shine brighter on the heavyweight class than it has in a decade.

Of course, the reverse is also true. If Klitschko-Haye is a dud, the backlash could conceivably push the big boys even closer to the brink of obscurity, particularly in the US. But it wouldn't kill the heavyweight division any more than Mayweather-De La Hoya killed boxing.

Boxing is bigger than any one fight, but sometimes a big fight can make a big difference. Klitchko-Haye is one of them.

**Nigel Collins**
**Editor-in-Chief**

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**FOUNDER**
Nathaniel S. Fleischer
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**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**
Nigel Collins

**MANAGING EDITOR**
Joseph Santoliquito

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**
David Romanosky

**CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER**
James Dinn

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**
Eric Raskin • Don Stewart

**SENIOR WRITER**
William Dettloff

**IMAGING SPECIALIST**
Tuan Doan
tuandoan@rogers.com

**CONTROLLER**
Deborah L. Harrison

**CIRCULATION DIRECTOR**
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

**ADVERTISING INQUIRIES**
Robert Gasparri
(213) 233-2952
sepub@sepublications.com

**SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES**
Sports and Entertainment Publications
P.O. Box 433122
Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122
1-800-846-6438
thering@emailcustomerservice.com

**SEND EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:**
comeoutwriting@sepublications.com

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**The Fight We Have All Been Waiting For**

"This may be the only heavyweight bout that matters, an antidote to the mind-numbingly sterile encounters of recent vintage. But still the smart money suggests that Haye, beaten only once in 26 fights, will be up against it."

*By Brian Doogan*

## 36 WLADIMIR KLITCHKO VS. DAVID HAYE

**20 Experts Pick The Winner**

"The Ring asked an eclectic group of 20 experts from the United States, England, Italy, Ukraine, and Germany what they think will happen when Haye finally meets a Klitschko."

*Compiled by Joseph Santoliquito*

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**Our Exclusive Annual Report**

"We offer perspective on everything of note in the sport, the highs and the lows from the heavyweights to the strawweights. We analyze each division, one by one, with an eye on what's been going on over the past year and what we can look forward to in the immediate future."

*By Eric Raskin*

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**How Preconceived Notions Fooled Everybody Except The Winners**

"The Ortiz we saw at Foxwoods wasn't the grinning heir apparent to Oscar De La Hoya that we've come to know. Instead, in the days prior to the bout, he'd been an angry little trash talker."

*By Don Stradley*

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"The ninth was the kind of mayhem that guys as old and worn down as Morales weren't supposed to survive, much less have the spirit to instigate."

*By William Dettloff*

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**An Innovative Concept For A New Era**

"The verdict from the fans and from the ringside press was that it was a remarkable success. The three-round limit meant that the boxers had no option but to go all out, which made for thrilling bouts."

*By Gavin Evans*

Cover Illustration by **Richard Slone**

Cover Design by **David Romanosky**

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WHAT KIND OF SHOCK WAVE DID VICTOR ORTIZ STIR BY UPSETTING ANDRE BERTO?
Find out on Page 62

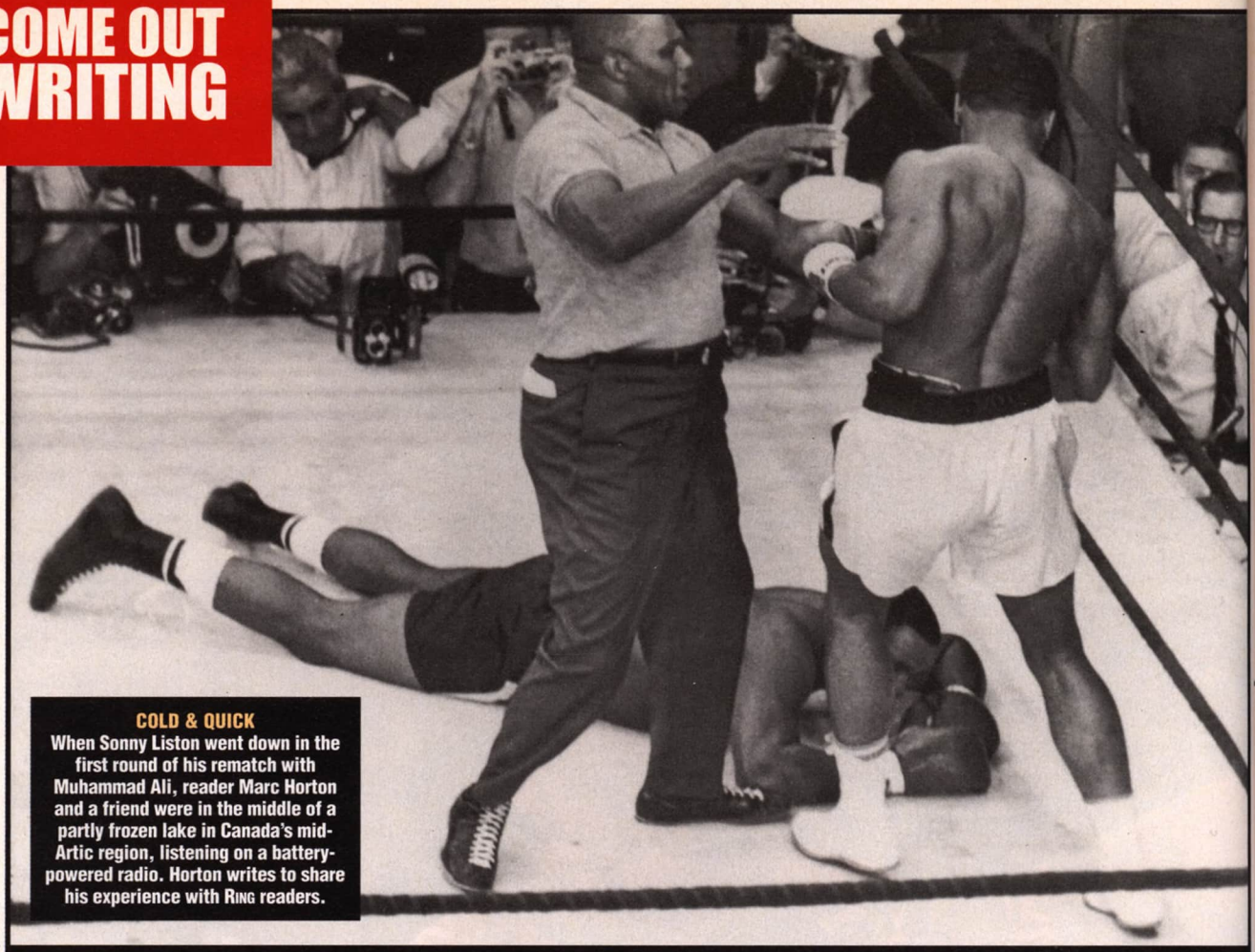
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**CHIN CHECK**

Previously undefeated slugger James Kirkland, who is usually the one dishing out the punishment, got a taste of his own medicine when Japan's Nobuhiro Ishida had the audacity to actually punch back. Kirkland was knocked down three times and stopped in the first round, demonstrating yet again that the only thing rolling over a series of no-hopers prepares a prospect for is an eventual ass-kicking.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

# COME OUT WRITING



**COLD & QUICK**
When Sonny Liston went down in the first round of his rematch with Muhammad Ali, reader Marc Horton and a friend were in the middle of a partly frozen lake in Canada's mid-Artic region, listening on a battery-powered radio. Horton writes to share his experience with RING readers.

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### A Night To Remember

Jeff Ryan's wonderfully evocative piece on the dark ages of media coverage of boxing ("Ryan Out Loud," May 2011 issue) reminded me of an unforgettable night of my own. I was raised in Yellowknife, a town of 1,200 people in Canada's mid-Arctic on the shores of Great Slave Lake, when Muhammad Ali—then Cassius Clay—fought Sonny Liston on May 25, 1965. We had one radio station in our town, which played a confusing blend of classical and country music, and no television whatsoever. The daily newspaper, *The Edmonton Journal*, was flown in from 1,000 miles south and was always two days late.

But a pal of mine and I were desperate to know if Ali could beat Liston again. We knew that radio reception could be very much hit-and-miss, but that sometimes, with luck, we could pick up an American station that just might be carrying the fight. We also knew that sometimes reception improved if you were out on the lake itself. So it was, that on a chilly early-spring night, two 15 year olds paddled a canoe through chunks of floating ice and desperately fiddled with the tuning dial on our huge battery-powered radio. Sure enough, we nailed it! A New York station had the fight, and we settled back, bundled up in parkas and mukluks, to listen to what we knew would be historic. It was probably just as well for us that the fight ended swiftly. I remember as we paddled back to shore that it began to snow. But I also remember how wonderful it was—a fight, a canoe, a friend, and a cold but unforgettable, northern night.

By the way, THE RING made it to our local newsstand in Yellowknife. I read it then and continue to read it now.

MARC HORTON
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

## It's About Time

I saw the "Ring Card Girl of the Month" in the May 2011 issue and I rolled my eyes. Why do ring card girls rank an article? They add nothing to the sport. As I was picking out the appropriate words for admonishment, I saw Chris Richards' "The Sweeter Science" column. Finally, the magazine has redeemed itself by acknowledging female fighters. Now, when I bring THE RING to the gym where I train/coach, I can show something inside it to the girls and women who train there.

HILLARI HUNTER
hhalto@yahoo.com

**WALKING PROUD**
Yuriorkis Gamboa struts his stuff after knocking out Jorge Solis in Atlantic City. Reader Harry S. Espinoza Jr. was delighted that Gamboa wore trunks honoring both the fighter's native Cuba and the United States.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

# TO WRITE THE RING

**Come Out Writing, The Ring,**
**P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422**
**comeoutwriting@sepublications.com**

*E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.*

## Rule Britannia

I know this is a bold statement and could be fueled by my English origins, but I believe that David Haye will kayo either of the Klitschko brothers this summer. Both Vitali and Wladimir, although boring and unattractive to watch, are supremely talented athletes and more than worthy champions. There are no secrets in either though. Haye will capitalize on this. His supreme self-confidence, although an ugly quality at times, will serve him well in the fight and will set him apart from most opponents either brother has faced. He will enter the fight as a heavy outsider, I would imagine, and although his record does not present any damning evidence to support my prediction. I believe Haye has the athleticism and ring savvy to evade their advances and the intellect and patience to time them later in the fight.

TERRY STRAWSON
Vancouver Island, Canada

## Morales' Marvel

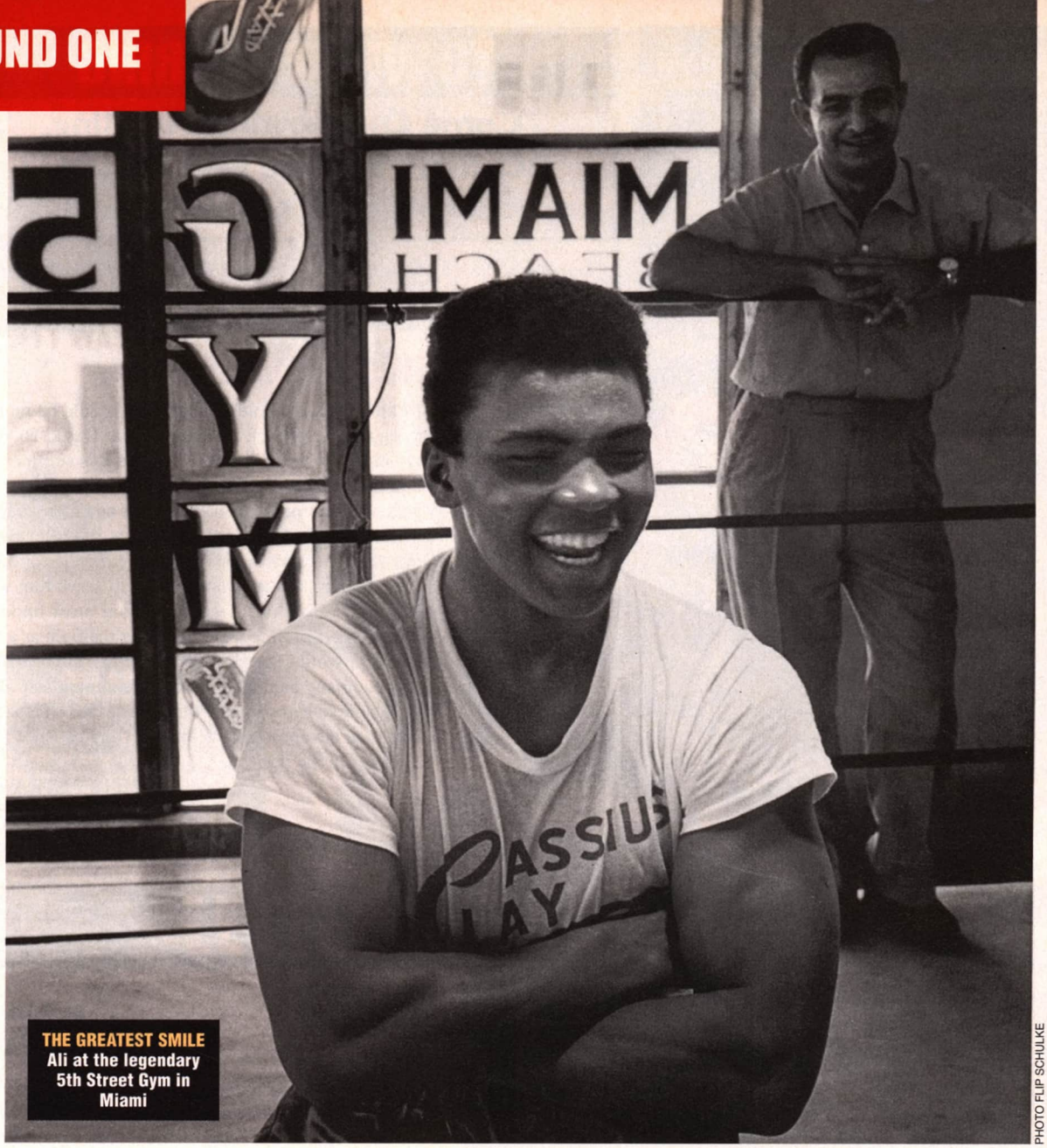
I was shocked to see Eric Morales perform the way he did against Marcos Maidana. His chin and championship heart are still in without question. Welcome back, "El Terrible."

R. WILLIAMS
r.williams6@ymail.com

## Fly Your Colors

I was surprised and happy to see Cuban fighter Yuriorkis Gamboa, who defected and now resides in the United States, proudly display the flag of the country that has given him freedom. For his kayo victory against Jorge Solis, he wore trunks that had the stars and stripes of the United States on one side and the Cuban flag on the other. I realize that he may not be the first boxer to do this; however, he's the first Cuban boxer from my generation that I can remember. I liked seeing that subtle display of affection towards our country, especially when someone flees from oppression and finds freedom and prosperity they could not get in their homeland. There's nothing wrong with being proud of your heritage, but the next time any boxer enters the ring with their entourage waving the flag of their country of origin, they should remember to pay homage to the country that made their success possible.

HARRY S. ESPINOSA JR.
Miami, FL




**THE GREATEST SMILE**
Ali at the legendary 5th Street Gym in Miami

PHOTO FLIP SCHULKE

# A Tribute To "The Greatest"

It's so enormous, over 20 pounds, that you can be overwhelmed by it. Then you open it, start turning the pages, and forget about its vast size because it's so engrossing that you might not come back up for air from *Greatest Of All Time: A Tribute To Muhammad Ali* for another three or four hours.

The pictures leap out and are riveting, almost three-dimensional in scope and the way they are displayed in this balanced, thoroughly entertaining, authoritative look back at the life of Muhammad Ali, published, edited, and directed by Benedikt Taschen.

While it's essentially a photo, coffee-table book, the writing is masterful with passages from a who's-who gallery of the all-time best writers from the last century, including Norman Mailer, Jim Murray, George Plimpton, Gay Talese, Mark Kram, Alex Haley, Gary Smith, and Tom Wolfe.

Add those fabled writers with the many behind-the-scenes, vivid shots from Neil Leifer and Howard Bingham, Ali's best friend and confidant, and you have quite possibly one of the most gripping portraits of "The Greatest" ever produced.

The massive 650-page voluminous reflection comes at a somewhat steep $150 price, but it's been marked down from the limited 1,000 editions of the book released in 2003 that weighed 75 pounds and cost $15,000, which were signed by Ali and Bingham and contained four gallery-quality gelatin silver prints. This version contains the same material as that version did, minus the autographs and prints.

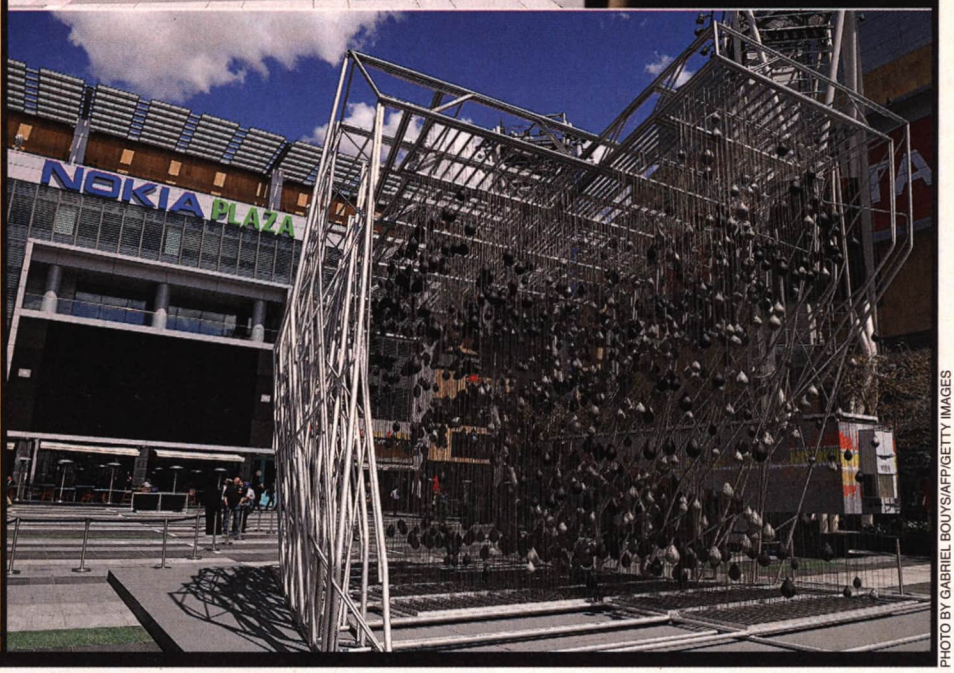
What you can't help but sense throughout the book is that Ali was the sun of many people's galaxies—photographers, writers, entertainers, women, men, blacks, and whites—but mostly he had an uncanny ability to connect with fans.

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRIBUTE

Internationally renowned sculptor Michael Kalish, who got his start turning license plates into works of art, has created a unique sculpture of Muhammad Ali. The sculpture, which was unveiled on March 25 and displayed at Nokia Plaza in Los Angeles until April 9, is made of 1,300 punching bags, suspended from a 22-foot-high installation made of stainless steel cable and aluminum pipe.

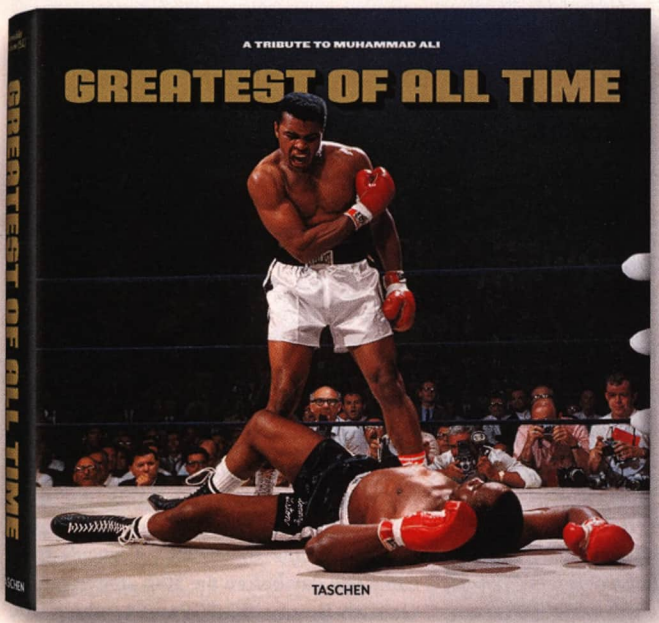
Kalish, who has also created sculptures of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Charlie Chaplin, and other pop icons, was approached by Ali and his wife, Lonnie, in 2008, who asked him to create a private, original sculpture of the three-time former heavyweight champion. Kalish said he got his inspiration for the Ali-project concept while falling asleep one night.

Working in conjunction with the Oyler Wu Collaborative, a Los Angeles-based architectural company, the sculpture took three years to complete. It will be displayed at other locations, but the places and dates had not been released as of press time.




**A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE**
**The viewer has to stand in front of the sculpture to realize it is Ali**

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES




There are numerous shots of Ali with everyday people, mingling out on the streets of Los Angeles, running with children on the dirt roads in Zaire, and standing on a Manhattan corner, next to a red light with no one seeming to pay attention to him. These weren't mock publicity shots that you'd see today with superstars. The images are vibrant and sincere. The book captures what made Ali so special, that tangible, magical cord that connected him to people, which is somehow lost between today's sports giants and the time when Ali ruled the sports world.

"Ali was and is one of a kind," said Bingham, who remains close with Ali to this day. "There is no one like him, and there won't be anyone like him anytime soon. I just happened to be the luckiest man in the world, and I have the best friend in the world, Ali. The book was Benedikt Taschen's idea, and I'm very honored to be a part of it. It has everything in it, it's Ali from A-to-Z, and it covers everyone and everything in his life. I'm just very fortunate to be part of it and one of the co-photographers with Neil Leifer to put this together."

Bound in a special carrying case, this keepsake is a treasure chest for any Ali fan. It's big, but then again, that's befitting when it comes to the personality and imprint of Muhammad Ali.

**—Joseph Santoliquito**

# BOXING BOOKSHELF

Writer Larry L. King once said that in terms of overall prestige, being the national boxing champion of Canada was on a par with being a notary public. Don't tell that to Dave Downey, whose seven-plus years reign as Canadian middleweight champion during the racially charged 1960s and early '70s in his native Halifax, Nova Scotia, is the subject of this engrossing book.

"While [Downey] spoke periodically about rising in the world rankings, this in truth seemed neither his impetus nor his incentive," writes author Robert Ashe. "Downey was palpably fulfilled—and extraordinarily proud—just to be Canadian champion. It was an achievement in which he gloried, even if others did not."

From 1960-'77, Downey had only 31 fights. He defended his national title just five times, and his career "was an erratic expedition of fits and starts, at moments farcical, at moments grand, devoid of a clean, progressive arc, haunted with the perception of talent squandered." He may have been a big fish in a small pond, but it was a time when the waters of Halifax were roiling with racial discord. As a black man who succeeded the revered and white Blair Richardson as Canada's top middleweight, Downey was smack in the middle of the turbulence. Two of his hometown fights provoked riots "with unmistakable racial overtones."

Ashe's thesis that Downey's career was actually impeded by racism is far from airtight. He concedes that boxing in general was on the decline in Nova Scotia when Downey was fighting and that the sport was rife with incompetent and raffish overseers. Downey himself was no ball of fire. "If he would fight more often and put on that kind of display regularly," wrote Hugh Townsend of the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* after Downey beat Roy Dale in 1973, "he could win back the many fans he has lost."

Sociology aside, the boxing reportage is first-rate. The portraits of Downey, Blair Richardson, and fellow Canadian ring idols Richie "Kid" Howard, Joey Durelle ("The many wars of 'Joey Durable' were carved into a face that at once horrified and amused"), and especially Ontario's Gary Broughton—who was Frazier to Downey's Ali—are compelling. Ali and Sugar Ray Robinson are in here, and the famous Stillman's Gym in New York City with "a stench that on its own seemed likely to inflict brain damage."

This is a book of exceptional merit that holds its own with anything produced south of the border.

**—Pete Ehrmann**

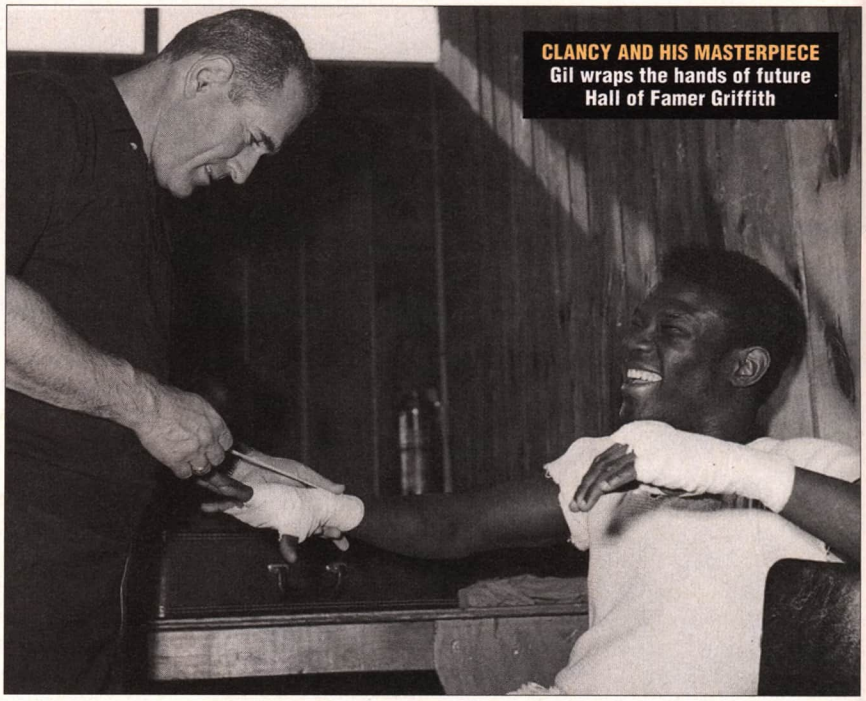
# Gil Clancy, 1923-2011

During his 88 years, Gil Clancy played many roles and did so exceedingly well. His time on this earth ended due to natural causes on March 31 at an assisted living facility in Lynbrook, New York.

Throughout his decades in boxing, Clancy filled just about every slot a person could. He boxed five times as a middleweight while serving in the Army, with his only loss coming to a 175-pounder in his final match. He then earned a master's degree in education from NYU and was teaching in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood when he accepted a coaching position at a PAL gym in Queens. The starting salary was $1,000 a year, and, for a while, he juggled both jobs to make ends meet.

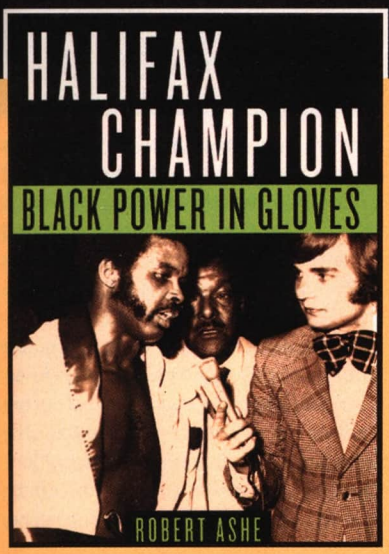
After he moved on to the Lynch Center PAL gym in the Bronx, his teaching skills and boxing acumen began bearing fruit. His New York Golden Gloves champions included Floyd Patterson, Emile Griffith, Randy Sandy, and Ralph "Tiger" Jones, the latter of which became Clancy's first notable pro.

Over the next several decades, Clancy worked with numerous world-class fighters. They included Oscar Bonavena, Gregorio Peralta, Mac Foster, Alex Miteff, Jerry Quarry, Johnny Persol, Harold Weston Jr., Charlie Green, Gerry Cooney, and Tom Bethea as well as champions Ken Buchanan, Juan LaPorte, Rodrigo Valdes, George Foreman, and Oscar De La Hoya.



**CLANCY AND HIS MASTERPIECE**
**Gil wraps the hands of future Hall of Famer Griffith**

Clancy's most famous partnership was with Griffith, who won multiple titles at welterweight and middleweight. Clancy was in the corner for all 112 fights, and their relationship endured long after their respective retirements. Incidentally, Clancy's death came one day before the 50th anniversary of Griffith-Benny "Kid" Paret I, which saw




**HALIFAX CHAMPION: BLACK POWER IN GLOVES**
***By Robert Ashe***
Formac Publishing Company Limited
soft cover, 208 pages, $19.95

Griffith win his first championship by 13th-round knockout.

Not only was he a talented trainer and cutman, but Clancy also guided careers with skill and street smarts. His work earned him Boxing Writers Association of America Manager of the Year honors in 1967 and 1973.

Following Griffith's retirement, Clancy served as Madison Square Garden's matchmaker from 1978-1981. His banter with Angelo Dundee during a cocktail party impressed CBS Sports president Barry Frank so much that he hired them on the spot.

Clancy shined as a broadcaster, working with CBS, HBO, and the MSG network. He won the BWAA's Sam Taub award for excellence in boxing journalism in 1983 and was enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1993.

Outside the ring he was a devoted family man and regular churchgoer. A man who loved structure, he lived in the same house in Malverne, New York, since the mid-1950s, where he raised six children with wife Nancy, who died 20 months earlier. Eighteen grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren survive him.

Boxing will miss Clancy's competence, candor, and charisma.

**—Lee Groves**

# TOP 10 BOXING TWEETS WE'LL NEVER SEE

1. **@FloydMayweather:** Made 4 sports bets yesterday and lost them all. Had I won, that money was going straight to my accountant to get me caught up on my taxes.
2. **@TheRealBHOP:** Boy, am I feeling my age today. I probably shouldn't have gone out drinking last night. And that Big Mac was a bad idea too.
3. **@loudibella:** Dang. Fiddlesticks. I am deeply upset about something, but will take it in stride, calmly, and not curse at all. Drat. How very perturbing.
4. **@TonyMargarito:** Yeah, I knew about the wraps. How oblivious do you think I am?
5. **@MikeTyson:** Going pigeon hunting today. I hate those stupid birds and want to blast them all to Bolivian.
6. **@OscarDeLaHoya:** I owe everything I have in life to Bob Arum. Cheowwwww!
7. **@TimothyBradley:** Xhfgplppshmvk#sqo@zwb Oops. Sorry about that. I just headbutted my keyboard.
8. **@rachcordingley:** Thinking about getting a breast reduction. Nobody seems to like these things.
9. **@HolyfieldWay:** That Sherman Williams fight was a real eye-opener. I'd better retire now, before I get hurt.
10. **@GilbertoWBA:** Sorry, boxing world. For everything.

**HAPPY LOU**
**Fiddlesticks!**

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

# YOU BE THE JUDGE

**Former Las Vegas boxing judge Chuck Giampa provides analysis of officials and scorecards of fights in which he is not directly involved.**

The following three instances will demonstrate the importance of teamwork among the boxing officials, specifically the referee, the inspector, and the ringside physician.

The June 2010 Miguel Cotto-Yuri Foreman fight was refereed by Arthur Mercante Jr. Foreman went down twice in the seventh round, re-injuring a previous knee injury. A towel was thrown into the ring from the direction of Foreman's corner. Mercante overruled it, believing the towel came from somewhere other than Foreman's corner. A thrown towel does not automatically stop the fight. At that point, the ring filled with the cornermen of both fighters.

Interestingly, Mercante decided that the fight was not over and cleared the ring. Foreman eventually lost by TKO in the ninth round due to the injury. Technically, Foreman could have been disqualified in the seventh round because his corner men entered the ring during the round.

In a postfight interview, Mercante explained why he didn't stop the fight in the seventh. However, as one journalist wrote, "it was abundantly clear that a one-legged Foreman didn't have a fighting chance of beating Cotto, who appeared to be getting stronger as the fight wore on." My request to interview Mercante after the fight was unsuccessful.

In a recent bout in Las Vegas, Russell Mora refereed a fight between Yudel Jhonson and Richard Gutierrez. Mora was concerned because Gutierrez was absorbing heavy punches. After the sixth round, Mora asked the ringside physician to look at Gutierrez, which is just what the doctor did. He climbed onto the apron and took a quick look at Gutierrez—but made no comment to the referee.

When a referee asks a doctor to examine the fighter between rounds, the ref is looking for input from the doctor as to the condition of the fighter. Only the referee can stop a fight in Nevada, but the doctor can advise the referee to do so. In this case, despite lack of input from the doctor, Mora decided in favor of the safety of the fighter and stopped the fight in the next round, awarding Jhonson a TKO victory.

Compare what happened in the two cases above with the third example:

Several years ago, before Kenny Bayless became a referee, he was a Nevada com-

# Outside The Ropes

Hall of Fame promoter **Don King** has had an arena named after him. Three title bouts have already been scheduled for the Don King Coliseum in Texcoco, Mexico … The Bryn (Wales) Residents Action Group has renamed a hill in honor of **Billy Beynon**, a Welsh bantamweight who won the British title by beating **Digger Stanley** in 1913. Beynon used to run up and down the hill during his legendary 20-mile training runs. The former fighter met a tragic death in 1932 in a mining accident when he threw himself in the path of a rockslide in order to save one of his sons. According to local lore, colleagues carried Beynon's coffin up the hill, and that his 15th child was christened on his coffin, on the day of his funeral … **Manny Pacquiao**'s ever-expanding list of commercial endorsements now encompasses the world of darts. Target Darts, the UK's most prestigious darts design and manufacturing company, has signed Pac-Man to an exclusive contract. Besides his own personal range of soft and steel-tipped darts, flights, surrounds, and bristle and soft-top dart boards, there will also be a Pacquiao "Family Pack," designed to "help promote enhanced math skills," especially among children in his native Philippines … Heavyweight **Odlanier Solis** spent his 31st birthday at St. Wolfgang Hospital in Bad Griesbach, Germany. Solis, who suffered a serious knee injury in his March 19 fight with **Vitali Klitschko** in Cologne, had already undergone surgery to repair the

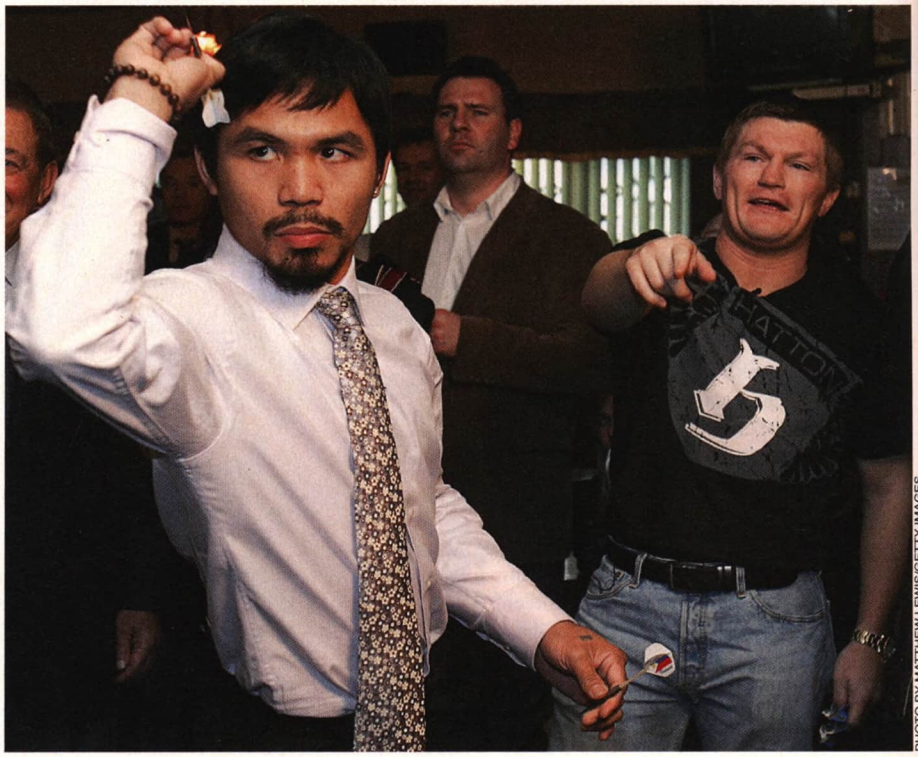


PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

**ON TARGET**
**Pac-Man now has his own line of darts**

mission inspector. Bayless noticed that the fighter to whom he was assigned was reacting strongly to the bodypunches he received. Between rounds, Bayless called ringside physician Dr. Flip Homansky to check the fighter. Flip did an expert examination and then touched the fighter's side, which caused the fighter pain. Dr. Homansky immediately recommended that the referee stop the fight and ordered the fighter to be taken to the hospital ASAP.

The fighter was diagnosed with a broken rib that had punctured the spleen. Due to the teamwork of the inspector, the doctor, and the referee, the fighter was spared serious injury.

Which of these three cases was handled correctly? You be the judge.

**—Chuck Giampa**

**IGNORING THE OBVIOUS**
**Mercante refuses to acknowledge white towel**

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

anterior cruiate ligament in his right knee and his meniscus. By the time you read this, Solis will have also had an operation to fix the anterior cartilage and flown home to Miami, Florida, to begin rehab. According to **Dr. Heinz-Jurgen Eichhorn**, Solis could be ready to return to the ring in October … **Rob McCracken**, the trainer of THE RING's third-ranked super middleweight, **Carl Froch**, has had his license revoked by the AIBA, the organization that governs Olympic boxing. McCracken, who had been head coach and performance director of the UK squad, was informed that he will no longer be able to take part in AIBA-sanctioned events due to his links with professional boxing. "We are very shocked by this new rule that could have a serious impact on our medal chances at the London 2012 Olympic," said an official of the British Amateur Boxing Association. Perhaps the oddest part of McCracken's banishment is that the AIBA claims that it has been unaware of McCracken's involvement with Froch until it was brought to its attention at the end of 2010 … **Rogelio Pacquiao**, the youngest brother of **Manny Pacquiao**, has been accused of punching **Marc Dominic Salazar** after losing a 130,000 Philippine Peso (approximately ($3,000) billiards bet. The alleged incident took place at the Pacman Sports Bar in General Santos City … According to RING contributor **David Mayo**, **Floyd Mayweather** has more tax problems. "After at least a half-dozen liens for various back-taxes issues over the last decade, Mayweather owes only the $3.4-million from 2009," wrote Mayo in the April 3 edition of *The Grand Rapids Press*, "although that figure very well may change next week, when taxes come due on a big earning year … Mayweather's 2010 tax bill will be a doozy compared to the one he still owes from 2009" … Former light heavyweight champion **Roy Jones** is also having significant tax problems. The IRS has placed liens on property Jones owns in Santa Rosa County, Florida. It is estimated that Jones owes approximately $3.5-million in back taxes from 2009, 2004, and 2003 … German female boxer **Rola El-Halabi**, 25, was shot in her dressing room while awaiting a bout with **Irma Balijagic**. The *Bild* newspaper identified the gunman as **Roy El-Halabi**, the woman's 44-year-old stepfather/manager, from whom Rola had split in January. "Papa rushed into the room," the undefeated Rola El-Halabi told the newspaper. "He threatened us with a gun in his hand and shouted 'Everybody out!' And then he shot me in the hand from three meters. I cried and screamed." The gunman also allegedly shot two security guards before he was arrested. The three victims were taken to the hospital for surgery. The injuries to Rola's hand, knee, and feet are not life-threatening but could endanger her boxing career … Mexican junior welterweight **Humberto Tapia**, 25, was shot and killed at the Ulloa Gym in Tijuana on March 29. According to police reports, **Adolfo Huerta**, a local wrestling promoter in charge of the gym, and Tapia came to blows after a heated argument. Huerta, 36, left the gym but returned with a gun and allegedly shot Tapia in the abdomen. Huerta was arrested on the spot, and Tapia, 15-16-1 (8), died en route to the hospital.

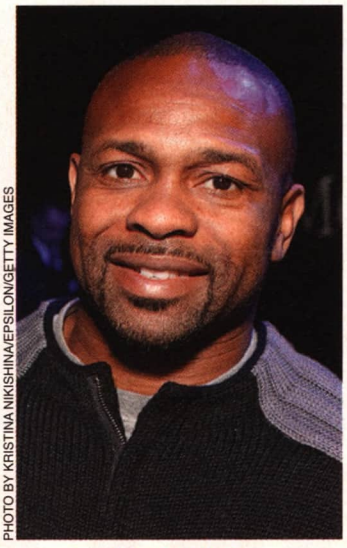


PHOTO BY KRISTINA NIKISHINA/EPSILON/GETTY IMAGES

**TAX PROBLEMS**
**The IRS claims Jones owes $3.5-million**

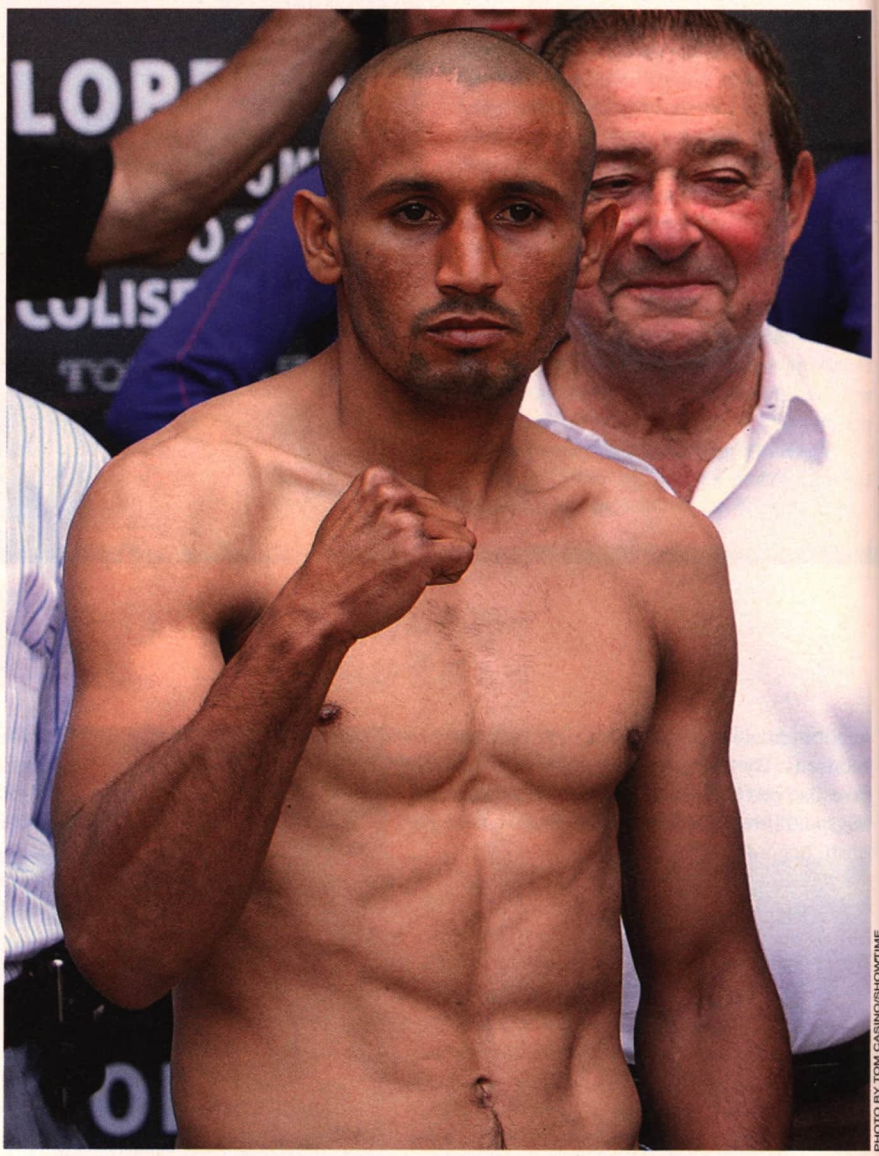


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

# FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

# ORLANDO SALIDO

Let this be yet another lesson to promoters who can make a big fight now but choose instead to let it marinate before throwing it on the fire. There's always the chance that a hungry dog will find its way into the kitchen and spoil the meal. And so Top Rank is left to pick up the pieces after 6-1 underdog Orlando Salido stunned Juan Manuel Lopez, ruining a matchup between Lopez and Yuriorkis Gamboa that would have been for the vacant RING featherweight championship.

Veteran Salido lost a decision last year to Gamboa, and his matchup with Lopez was supposed to provide a measuring stick between the two rising stars. Salido proved to be more whoopin' stick than measuring stick, however. He battered the previously unbeaten Lopez with right hands, dropped him in the fifth, and forced a stoppage in the eighth.

Top Rank's matchmakers should have known better, especially after watching Salido give Gamboa problems last September. Salido is 35-11-2, but that record is misleading, given that he turned pro at age 15 and was 11-7-2 with five losses by stoppage through 20 fights. It was a rough apprenticeship that prepared him for the world-class level, and, at age 30, it all came together against Lopez.

# RATINGS ANALYSIS

## For Period Ended April 24, 2011

**Heavyweights:** Tomasz Adamek (fourth last issue) switches with Alexander Povetkin (third last issue), courtesy of a busy schedule. Robert Helenius debuts at nine thanks to stopping Sam Peter, pushing out Kubrat Pulev (10th last issue) and moving down Chris Arreola, who slides from nine to 10, since he hasn't beaten anyone of Peter's caliber.

**Cruiserweights:** No changes.

**Light Heavyweights:** Chris Henry (ninth last issue) exits due to inactivity, which moves up Gabriel Campillo (10th last issue) to nine and makes room for Isaac Chilemba to enter at 10.

**Super Middleweights:** Robert Stieglitz (seventh last issue) rises to five after his DQ victory over Khoren Gevor. Stieglitz advancement allows everyone ranked seven and below to climb one place and allows Dimitri Sartison to debut at 10. Andre Dirrell (fifth last issue) departs because he has not fought in more than a year.

**Middleweights:** Previously undefeated David Lemieux (10th last issue) is replaced by Marco Antonio Rubio, who reenters at 10.

**Junior Middleweights:** No changes.

**Welterweights:** Victor Ortiz shook up the welterweight division when he upset Andre Berto (third last issue). Ortiz debuts at welterweight at three; Berto slides to five, pushing down Jan Zaveck (fifth last issue) to six. Joshua Clottey (sixth last issue) exits due to inactivity. Timothy Bradley (ninth last issue) exits due to his focus on the junior welterweight division. The departures of Clottey and Bradley allow Mike Jones (10th last issue) to move to nine and Selcuk Aydin to enter at 10.

**Junior Welterweights:** Juan Urango (sixth last issue) and Paul McCloskey (10th last issue) exit. Urango has not fought in more than a year, while McCloskey lost a technical decision to current number-two rated Amir Khan. Victor Ortiz (ninth last issue) departs to fight at welterweight. Their departures make room for Erik Morales to enter at nine based on his strong showing against Marcos Maidana (currently third), Zab Judah (seventh last issue) and Lamont Peterson (eighth last issue) to climb one rung each, and Lucas Matthysse and Danny Garcia to enter at nine and 10, respectively.

**Lightweights:** Robert Guerrero (10th last issue) zips to three on the strength of his dominating decision over Michael Katsidis, who falls from three to five. Ali Funeka (fourth last issue) exits due to inactivity. Undefeated John Murray (sixth last issue) moves up to four following his win over Karim El Ouazghari. Katsidis' tumble pushes down Miguel Acosta (fifth last issue) to six. Funeka's departure also makes room for Antonio De Marco to enter at 10.

**Junior Lightweights:** No changes.

**Featherweights:** Orlando Salido (fourth last issue) moves to three after his upset TKO of Juan Manuel Lopez (first last issue), who sags to four. Lopez' fall allows Yuriorkis Gamboa (second last issue) to become number one and Chris John to move from three to two. Jhonny Gonzalez enters at 10, powered by his knockout of Hozumi Hasegawa (10th last issue), who departs.

**Junior Featherweights:** Takalani Ndlovu (eighth last issue) switches with Steve Molitor (fifth last issue) based on his decision victory over Molitor.

**Bantamweights:** Vic Darchinyan (eighth last issue) and Yonnhy Perez (sixth last issue) trade places following Darchinyan's technical decision victory over Perez.

**Junior Bantamweights:** There is a lot going on here. Yota Sato (ninth last issue) jumps to five based on his decision win over Kohei Kono (fourth last issue), who drops to eight. Omar Narvaez (fifth last issue) advances to three thanks to his victory over previously undefeated Cesar Seda (eighth last issue), who sinks to 10, advancing Juan Alberto Rosas to nine. With the realignment, Nobuo Nashiro (third last issue) falls to four.

**Flyweights:** Herman Marquez enters at three after stopping Luis Concepcion (second last issue), who tumbles to four, while Takefumi Sakata (third last issue) moves to two. With the addition of Marquez, everyone four and below drops a spot forcing out Tomonobu Shimizu (10th last issue).

**Junior Flyweights:** World champion Giovani Segura stopped former champ Ivan Calderon (first last issue), sending Calderon to three and elevating Gilberto Keb Baas (second last issue) to one and Omar Nino (third last issue) to two.

**Strawweights:** Former IBF titleholder Muhammad Rachman returns to the ratings at 10 following his knockout of previously undefeated Kwanthai Sithmorseng. Rahman's return pushes out Michael Landero (10th last issue).

**Pound-for-Pound:** Juan Manuel Lopez (ninth last issue) departs following his stunning TKO loss to Orlando Salido. With "JuanMa" out, Giovani Segura goes from 10 to nine and Andre

### How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com. *Records provided by boxrec.com.*

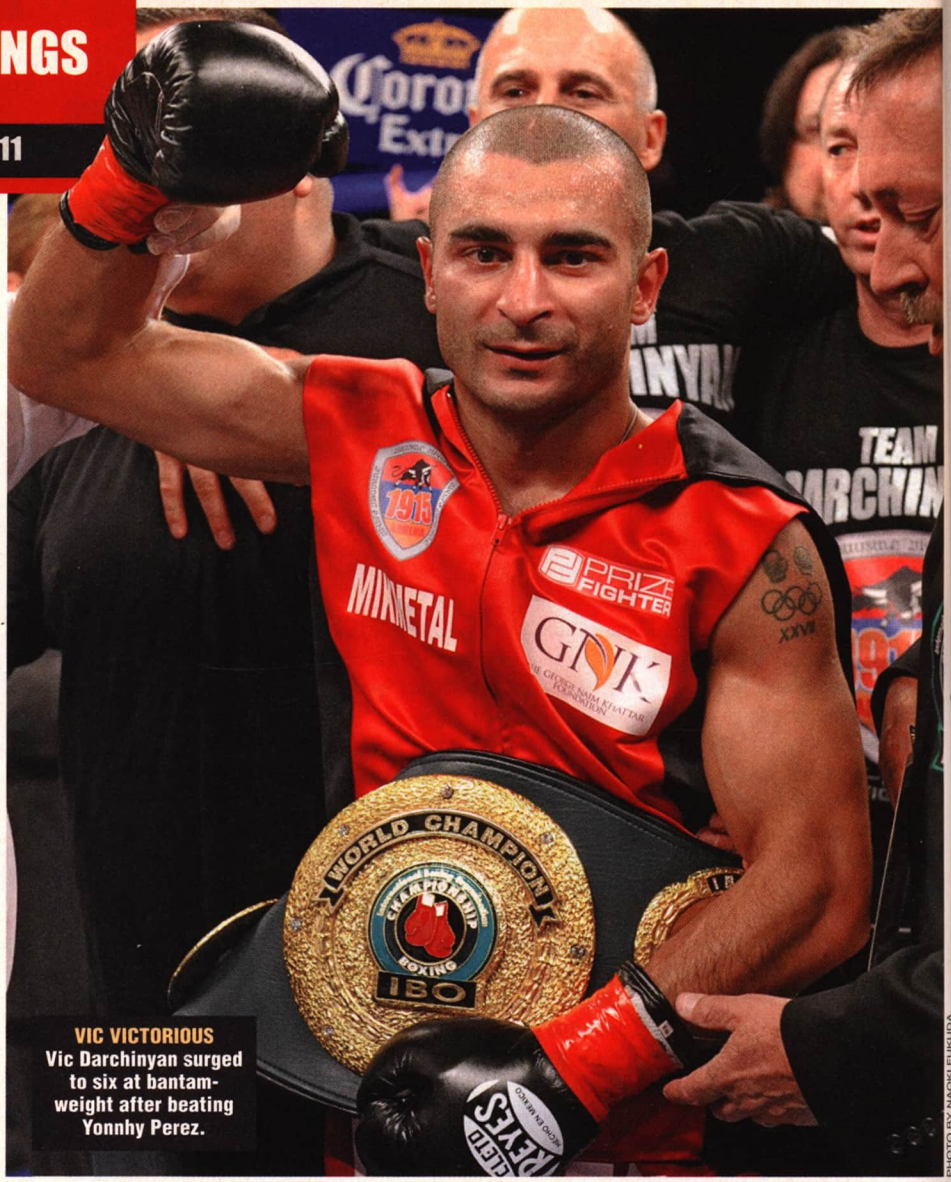
## POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** *Welterweight*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
4. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Bantamweight*
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
6. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
8. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight/ Welterweight*
9. **GIOVANI SEGURA** *Junior Flyweight*
10. **ANDRE WARD** *Super Middleweight*

# The RING RATINGS

**For Period Ended April 24, 2011**

**For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com**




**VIC VICTORIOUS**
Vic Darchinyan surged to six at bantamweight after beating Yonnhy Perez.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

## HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Unlimited*

**Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 55-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 42-2 (39)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-1 (23)
3. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 44-1 (28)
4. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 21-0 (15)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 36-2 (18)
7. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 31-1 (21)
8. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
9. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Germany15-0 (10)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 30-2 (26)

## CRUISERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 200 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 24-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 32-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 45-2-1 (32)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 21-1 (16)
5. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-3 (27)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 27-3-1 (11)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 16-2-3 (7)
9. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (2
10. **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba 24-1 (13)

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 175 pounds*

**Champ: JEAN PASCAL**
Haiti 26-1-1 (16)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 51-5-2 (32)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 22-0 (18)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 21-0 (10)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-2 (15)
7. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 22-1 (13)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 11-1 (7)
9. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)
10. **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
South Africa 19-1-1 (8)

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 168 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 23-0 (13)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 28-0 (23)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 27-1 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 43-2 (32)
5. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 40-2 (23)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 29-3 (22)
8. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
9. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 32-2 (26)
10. **DIMITRI SARTISON**
Germany 27-1 (17)

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 160 pounds*

**Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 47-2-2 (26)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 35-2-1 (15)
2. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-3-1 (16)
3. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 39-2 (27)
4. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 24-1 (15)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 28-2 (19)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-0 (10)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 18-0 (14)
8. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 40-12 (23)
9. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 26-0 (17)
10. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
Mexico 50-5-1 (43)

## JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 154 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 36-2 (29)
2. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
3. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 19-1 (16)
4. **RYAN RHODES**
   England 45-4 (31)
5. **SECHEW POWELL**
   Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
6. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 29-0 (18)
7. **PAWEL WOLAK**
   Poland 29-1 (19)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-1 (23)
9. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
   Mexico 36-0-1 (26)
10. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
    Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)

## WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 147 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 52-3-2 (38)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
3. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
   Garden City, KS 29-2-2 (22)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-6-1 (39)
5. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-1 (21)
6. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 31-1 (18)
7. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
8. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 37-9-1 (19)
9. **MIKE JONES**
   Philadelphia, PA 24-0 (18)
10. **SELCUK AYDIN**
    Turkey 21-0 (16)

## JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 140 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 27-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 25-1 (17)
3. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 30-2 (27)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 21-1 (13)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 41-6 (28)
7. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (14)
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 51-7 (35)
9. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
   Argentina 28-1 (26)
10. **DANNY GARCIA**
    Philadelphia, PA 21-0 (14)

## LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 135 pounds*

**Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 52-5-1 (38)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 27-0-1 (20)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 55-7-2 (32)
3. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
   Gilroy, CA 29-1-1 (18)
4. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 31-0 (18)
5. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-4 (22)
6. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 28-4-2 (22)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 27-1 (19)
8. **URBANO ANTILLON**
   Mexico 28-2 (20)
9. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 28-3 (12)
10. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
    Mexico 25-2-1 (18)

## JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 130 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 31-2 (8)
3. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 17-0 (14)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE LINARES**
   Venezuela 30-1 (19)
8. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (10)
9. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 18-1 (9)
10. **JASON LITZAU**
    St. Paul, MN 28-2 (21)

## FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 126 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 20-0 (16)
2. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 45-0-2 (22)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 35-11-2 (23)
4. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-1 (27)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 41-3 (34)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
   Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
   Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
9. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 39-6 (35)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
    Mexico 48-7 (42)

## JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 122 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 38-4-3 (24)
2. **AKIFUMI SHIMODA**
   Japan 23-2-1 (10)
3. **RYOL LI LEE**
   Japan 17-2-1 (8)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 44-2 (30)
5. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 32-6 (18)
6. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 8-0 (6)
7. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
   Panama 37-3-2 (23)
8. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-2 (12)
9. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
   South Africa 24-3-2 (14)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
    Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (17)

## BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 118 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 26-1 (18)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 28-2 (22)
4. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 21-0-1 (13)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 44-3-2 (34)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 36-3-1 (27)
7. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 44-2 (22)
8. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-2-1 (14)
9. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 24-1 (15)
10. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
    Philippines 28-2-3 (17)

## JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 115 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 34-6-2 (24)
2. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 35-12-1 (23)
3. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 34-0-2 (19)
4. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 14-3-1 (9)
5. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (11)
6. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
   Philippines 20-0-1 (16)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
   Mexico 41-6-2 (18)
8. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan 25-6 (9)
9. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
   Mexico 32-6 (26)
10. **CESAR SEDA**
    Puerto Rico 20-1 (15)

## FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 112 pounds*

**Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 80-3-1 (44)

1. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 36-3-3 (23)
2. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
3. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 30-2 (23)
4. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-2 (17)
5. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 52-3-1 (22)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 27-2 (18)
7. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico 35-5-1 (28)
8. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 28-6-2 (18)
8. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines 24-0 (8)
10. **EDGAR SOSA**
    Mexico 42-6 (25)

## JR. FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 108 pounds*

**Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA**
Mexico 27-1-1 (23)

1. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 35-20-4 (22)
2. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
3. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-2-1 (6)
4. **RODEL MAYOL**
   Philippines 27-5-2 (21)
5. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-9-2 (18)
6. **CARLOS TAMARA**
   Colombia 21-6 (15)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 28-3 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 32-2-3 (21)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 26-1 (15)
10. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
    Nicaragua 28-0 (23)

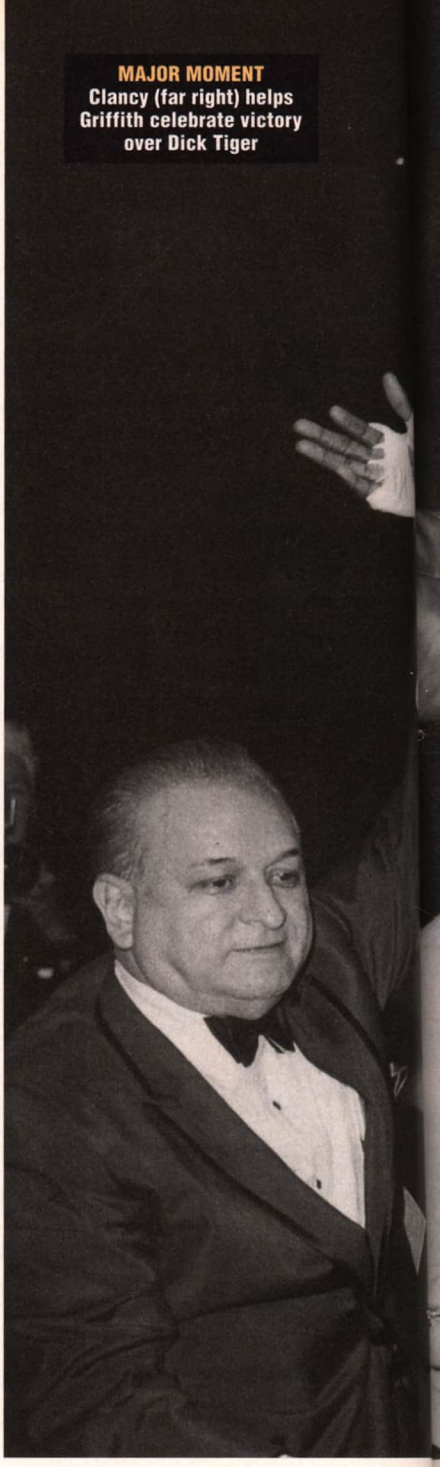
## STRAWWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 105 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan 7-0 (5)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 35-1-1 (13)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (17)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 28-1-3 (15)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 25-5-1 (21)
7. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 27-3 (21)
8. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 26-4-6 (16)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 24-4 (10)
10. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
    Indonesia 64-10-5 (33)

by Jeff Ryan

# Fancy That Clancy



**MAJOR MOMENT**
Clancy (far right) helps Griffith celebrate victory over Dick Tiger

If you're not Irish, you might not understand how those of us who are could like bagpipe music, step dancing, freckly redheads, and a beer that's both darker than Ireland's economic forecast and thicker than an Aer Lingus flight attendant's brogue. And if that's the case, well, then good luck comprehending the Irish's attitude toward their dearly departed. To them, funerals are more of a celebration of the life of the deceased than a somber mourning of their passing. The music is festive, the drinks plentiful, and everyone shares his or her memories with far more laughter than tears.

So in writing about the death of Gil Clancy, one of the fight game's premier Irish-Americans, it seems only fitting to share some upbeat and off-beat stories about him and not turn this column into a eulogy. After all, someone as easy-going and quick with a quip as Clancy was wouldn't want us to walk around with lumps in our throats as though we were having trouble digesting bad corned beef.

Because I'd never really paid attention to trainers and cornermen in the years preceding my covering the sport as a journalist, my initial introduction to Clancy came when he was teamed with Tim Ryan on CBS' weekend matinee telecasts. Right away, Clancy's style was easy to like. He imparted wisdom that couldn't be heard anywhere else on the airwaves, yet did it while sounding like your favorite uncle sitting across the living room.

He was the first analyst I'd ever heard explain how a mediocre talent who captured an alphabet belt got such a jolt of confidence that he automatically became a better fighter or that two warriors who had trained properly would inevitably get a late-rounds "second wind," no matter how exhausted they appeared. Then, of course, there was Clancy's Theory of Rematch Relativity: A fighter who was knocked out will almost certainly be stopped again in the sequel, this time even quicker. Darned if it wasn't right on all counts.

Clancy was the most laid-back of interviews on the phone, yet my first in-person meeting with him was more nerve-wracking than an IRS audit. We were sitting ringside outdoors in Las Vegas one afternoon while some prelims were unfolding above us. I'd been told that Clancy had a glass eye (it was true), but I wasn't sure which orb was the fake one. Did you ever see the scene in *Brian's Song*, where Gale Sayers, believing incorrectly that Coach Halas was deaf in one ear, kept maneuvering around the coach's office to get on his good side? Well, that was me, positioning and repositioning my folding chair in the glare of the sun, never sure if Clancy could see me out the corner of his eye and trying to make sure I was constantly in his line of vision. He must have thought I'd downed 12 cups of coffee that afternoon or had Stage Four jock itch.

It's worth noting that Clancy had the one and only decent-looking toupee I've ever seen in my life. Most wigs on men make it appear that either a) a squirrel has climbed on the poor guy's head, or b) Tiger Woods has just followed through on the seventh tee and the divot from his driver has landed atop somebody's pate. Maybe it was because Clancy had the good sense to get a gray one or because it sat low on his head, but, whatever the reason, his hairpiece looked, dare I say, *good*.

Speaking of that wig, I thought Clancy was going to flip it one day when we were sitting by his pool in Long Island and I mentioned Ronnie Harris. The one-time middleweight contender had a falling-out with Clancy when the Irishman was his manager, and, as it just so happened, Clancy later found himself doing color on one of Harris' bouts. After that fight, Clancy attempted the first in-ring interview he'd ever done as a broadcaster.

"I go into the ring to interview him, and he starts calling me a racist, a slave owner," Clancy recalled. "And here I am holding the microphone right there for him all the time he was saying it. I don't get rattled that easily, but I felt like whacking him in the mouth with the microphone. Instead, I just said, 'Hey, Ronnie, I'm sorry you feel that way. I think when I managed you, I did the best I could.' I ended up getting a lot of positive feedback from that. Everybody thought I handled him well."

Clancy had a way of being in the weirdest place at the weirdest time. He was working with George Foreman that night in San Juan in 1977 when, after dropping a decision to Jimmy Young, Big George had visions of Jesus Christ in the locker room. Clancy, who always insisted it was a hallucination brought on by heat prostration and not a religious experience, was one of those trying to restrain what he described as "a 230-pound strong nude man" who was attempting to run back out into the crowd. I don't know what Clancy got paid that night, but it's safe to say it was about one-tenth of what it should have been.

From amateur fighter, trainer and manager to matchmaker and commentator, Clancy did everything in boxing. He even briefly hosted his own talk show on a cable outlet called FNN-Score. Steve Farhood and I were guests on it once, and we remarked afterward that Clancy did a nice job even though he was a broadcasting counterpuncher who had to assume the unfamiliar role of aggressor as

host, not that he ever lacked for confidence with a mic in front of him. In fact, he was confident enough for two.

During the heyday of Riddick Bowe, "Big Daddy" once set up his training camp at one of those aging resorts in New York State's Borscht Belt. Before a morning workout, Clancy was interviewing Bowe's trainer, the venerable Eddie Futch, who was unexpectedly off his verbal game. Unsteady Eddie rambled on and on until Clancy cut him off, stopped the tape, and suggested what might make for a better answer to the question. The tape rolled again, the interview resumed, and Futch repeated virtually word-for-word what Clancy had suggested he say. When he was done, Clancy smiled and said, "Hey, that's a good point, Eddie."

For me and countless other Saturday afternoon fight junkies, Clancy was a vital part of the soundtrack of boxing in the 1980s. And before the health problems started to overtake him in recent years, he was a great guy to call for a quote or a unique perspective. He was always candid, as evidenced by the fact that he even assigned himself some measure of blame for the death of Bennie Paret at the hands of his fighter, Emile Griffith. (He'd always told Griffith to keep punching until an opponent toppled or the referee intervened). Clancy was a true boxing guy. In this business, is there a better compliment?

Though I've often been accused of drinking while writing this column, the truth is that I've never touched a drop while touching the keyboard. Until now, when I'm actually typing these last few words with one finger and raising a shot glass full of Jameson to the sky.

To you, Gil. ■

# DIGGING DEEP

by Ivan Goldman

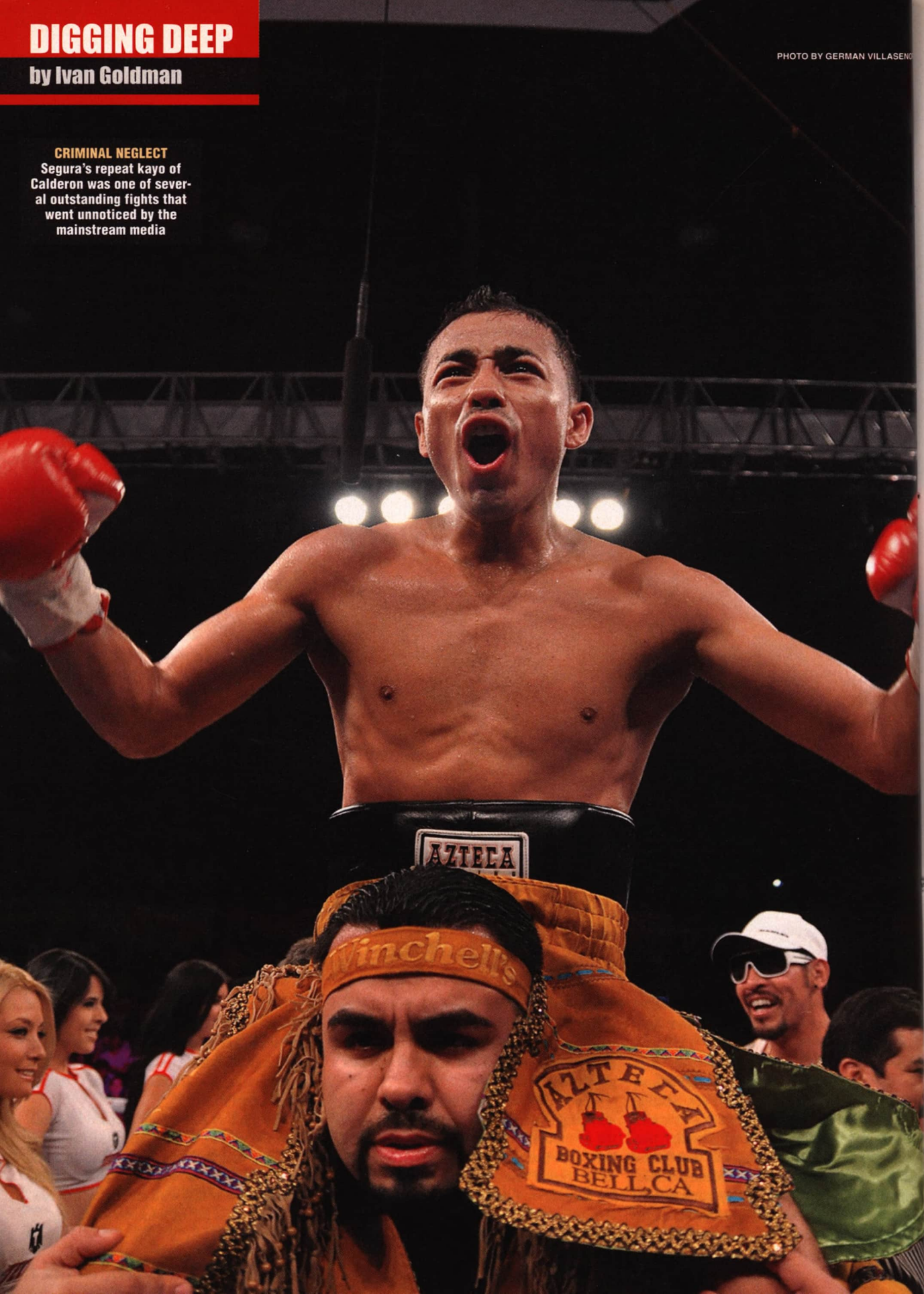



PHOTO BY GERMAN VILLASEN

**CRIMINAL NEGLECT**
Segura's repeat kayo of Calderon was one of several outstanding fights that went unnoticed by the mainstream media

# Where's The Coverage?

I ran into someone who claimed he used to be an enthusiastic fight fan but there didn't, he grumbled, seem to be much "going on" in the boxing world anymore.

Ironically, his comment came shortly after Giovani Segura annihilated the great Ivan Calderon in a freakish display of light flyweight power, the kind you get to see every 20 years or so if you're lucky. Two weeks later, HBO and Showtime went head to head on Saturday with sensational upsets that became instant candidates for Fight of the Year—Victor Ortiz over Andre Berto and Orlando Salido over Juan Manuel Lopez.

And that's just some of what was going on. Great matchups percolated in a variety of weight classes—junior welters Tim Bradley-Amir Khan, for example, and the continuing parade of gritty "Super Six" fights. Even the heavyweight division was coming back to life, with champion Wladimir Klitschko at last closing in on duck-master David Haye and his brother, Vitali, preparing for Tomasz Adamek.

So how did I answer this clueless complainer who probably couldn't name three active fighters but was instructing me on the sorry state of the sport? Well, I was patient, explaining, as I've done many times for others like him, that just because he doesn't see that much about boxing in his local paper or wherever it is he gets his sports news, that doesn't mean the sport has shut down or become dull.

It all breaks down to that old philosophical question about a tree no one hears falling in a forest. Did it make a sound? Boxing is that falling tree even though some of us hear it perfectly.

Getting the word out on thrilling fighters is trickier than ever with the mass media in such a flux. People harvest information from a confusing variety of electronic devices while *Newsweek*, a monster media name for decades, was recently sold for a dollar. Not one copy of the magazine. The whole company. They figured what with all the debts and the miserable cash flow, a buck was a fair price.

Boxing promoters and their public relations people are no longer sure which mass media they should be courting and sometimes run out of ideas to get the public to pay attention. They couldn't even get *The New York Times*, which claims to contain "all the news fit to print," to send someone to Connecticut for a classic East Coast-West Coast battle between Ortiz and Berto.

Also, The *Times*' editors apparently aren't aware that nearly a million Puerto Ricans live in New York and that they all love Juan Manuel Lopez. What is regarded as the best newspaper in America didn't even bother to run a little wire story about his loss to Salido in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

I don't understand what media gatekeepers look for anymore. But reading all those sports sections bulging with golf and tennis, I can only conclude that the results don't have to be particularly interesting.

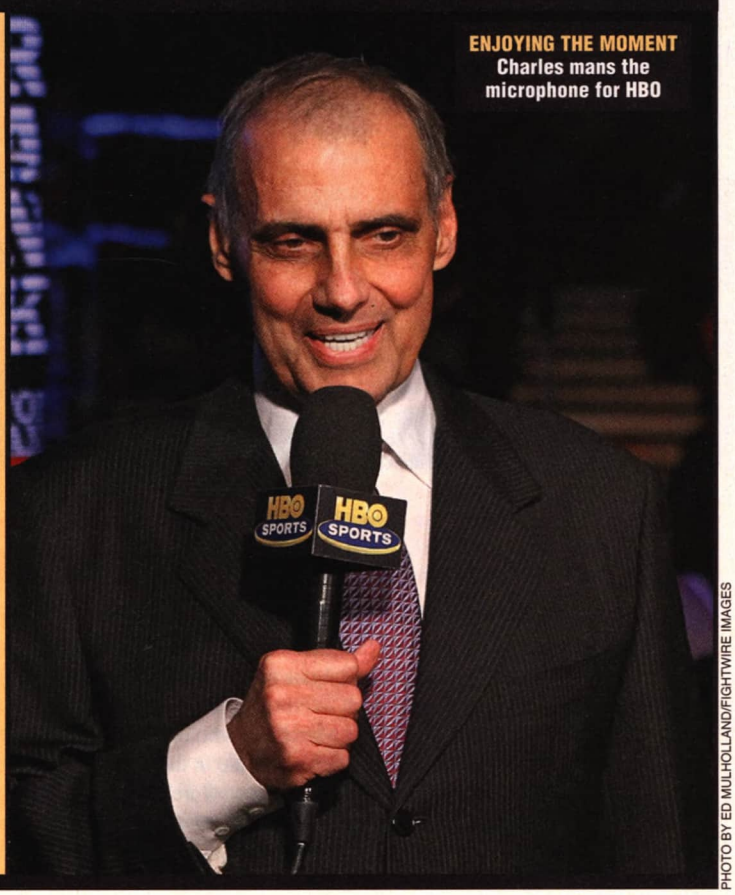
# NICK CHARLES: CLASS ACT

It was a fine night in Atlantic City when Showtime's Nick Charles expertly called a featherweight match for rival HBO that ended with Mikey Garcia's 10th-round stoppage of Matt Remillard. It's no secret that Charles, afflicted by bladder cancer that's spread to other organs, has been fighting through physical and emotional torment for two years. HBO's invitation was a generous tribute to a true gentleman and solid professional. Not faltering a moment, he made sure the network got its money's worth.

Among those making periodic pilgrimages to Charles' New Mexico home to help him and his family play the tough hand they were dealt are Mike Tyson and Charles' *ShoBox* partner and best friend Steve Farhood.

Charles and I exchange occasional e-mails and realize now that growing up in Chicago our paths nearly crossed more than once as we knocked around some of the same places at the same time. Reflecting on some unlovely experiences, he concluded that "fighting through adversity" is a "reflection of what boxing is" and why we become attracted to it. He also cited those "watershed moments" when you have to find that "extra gear" that enables us to "never be trapped in life and to dig deeper for the focus and determination that helped shape us."

Charles didn't need a brutal bout with cancer to know he was living a remarkable life and that it was incumbent on him to keep his eyes open and try to appreciate it and understand what it all means. He said he was "still hoping and praying for a miracle from God and enjoying each moment here."




**ENJOYING THE MOMENT**
Charles mans the microphone for HBO

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

# Man Of The Hour

Ahem, in the October 2009 issue, after what seemed like the whole world piled on Victor Ortiz because he quit against Marcos Maidana in the sixth round, I predicted that the day would come when those who wrote him off would see they were mistaken.

Why was I right for once? One, it was obvious that Ortiz is a great talent. Two, he knows more about overcoming adversity than any boxing analyst you can name, with the exception of Nick Charles (see Page 23). Three, he was only 22 at the time. I remembered how dumb I was at that age. Four, and this is as important as number one, this abandoned kid who'd fought his way up from the streets had no idea how vicious the boxing media can be. He looked around at network analysts in their suits and ties and with their kind manners and pretty makeup and thought he'd reached civilization. He couldn't know these guys are quicker to form a wolf pack than actual wolves. So when they stuck a microphone in his face, thinking he was among friends, he told them the truth. And he paid.

Speaking of postfight interviews, James Kirkland, called on moments after being destroyed by prohibitive underdog Nobuhiro Ishida in the first round, apparently was unaware he'd been beaten to the canvas three times. When a surfer makes it back to shore after being attacked by a shark, it's not a good idea to ask his opinions about the encounter before he gets a chance to count his limbs. Ditto for fighters.

**REDEMPTION**
Ortiz overcame adversity to beat Berto

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

# Merchant Breaks It Down

In a previous column, I posed a question about Halls of Fame. Which is correct? The baseball hall that's quick to block even great players if they transgress its taboos or the more tolerant International Boxing Hall of Fame?

The question interested HBO's Larry Merchant, who replied:

"Willie Pep and Jake LaMotta fixed fights and are in the boxing Hall of Fame. Joe Jackson and Pete Rose gambled and aren't in the baseball Hall of Fame. Different animals, different standards."

Regarding PEDs (performance-enhancing drugs). "I've been ringside for four fights after which fighters [James Toney, Roy Jones, Fernando Vargas, Shane Mosley] tested or admitted positive. None of them raised suspicions at the time by how they fought. In Mosley's case, in hindsight, he actually looked worse, sluggish, in the rematch with [Oscar] De La Hoya, the PED fight, than he did in their first fight. I was among those who thought he lost the rematch.

"Dr. Margaret Goodman told me that a number of fighters admitted use to her after she left the Nevada commission. I asked her if she noticed any difference in their performances. She said she couldn't think of any.

# MAGOO

**QUESTIONABLE KAYO**
**Referee Fields gets a Magoo for ignoring Gamboa's fouls**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

To referee David Fields for a succession of awful calls when Cuban defector Yuriorkis Gamboa stopped Jorge Solis inside of four rounds. The second knockdown called in the second round went like this: 1. Rabbit punch from Gamboa (one of many he threw during the fight) 2. Gamboa trips Solis. 3. Gamboa pushes Solis to the canvas. The proper call was no knockdown and a point deduction.

Gamboa also hit Solis to the back of the head when, after the last knockdown, he was practically prone on the canvas. An abominable double foul that can't be ignored.

Memo to next Gamboa referee: Tell him something like this in your prefight meeting: "Rabbit punches are very dangerous, and you have a history. This counts as your first warning. A second warning may be accompanied by a point deduction. Anything flagrant after that will mean lost points or disqualification. Rabbit punch a man when he's down, and I will also do everything in my power to withhold your purse. Have a good night. Welcome to America."

"Below heavyweight, and perhaps one Toney fight as a cruiserweight, I haven't seen evidence that PEDs have raised anyone's game the way they clearly have in baseball, football, cycling, et al. Have you?"

I'm no scientist, but I recall a credible study that found some of these substances aided speed and strength. Maybe Mosley's performance in that second Oscar fight would have been worse without the PEDs. We just can't know. He injected them in his abdomen, so he must have felt they were important, but he could have been wrong. I seem to recall that Dr. Goodman once wrote about a particular steroid that she said appeared tailor-made for fighters. So she changes her mind, as most of us do.

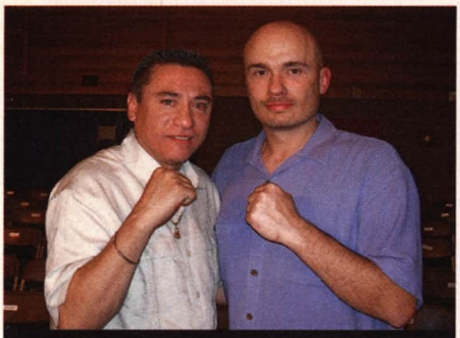
Toney, trying to extend his career, may have been hurt by PEDs. He screwed up his Achilles tendon, came back after months, and tore his biceps in the middle of a fight, winning it with one arm. I'm a Hall of Fame voter who will say yes to both Toney and Mosley. They earned it. I forgive them. But Antonio Margarito? Not a chance. Slipping plaster inside your gloves is 100 steps too far. ■

*Ivan Goldman can be reached at ivangoldman@yahoo.com*

# AT THE FIGHTS

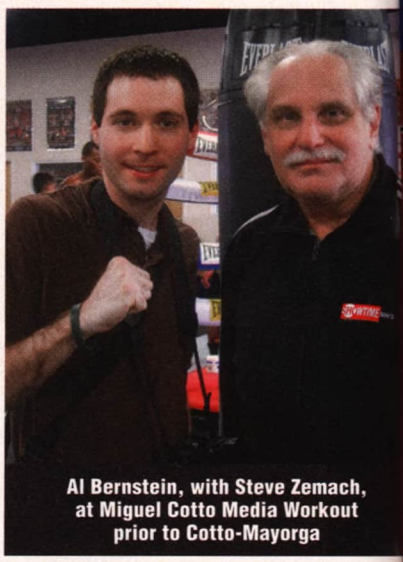
## WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN THE RING MAGAZINE?

***Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will c sider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to celebrityphotos@sepublications.com. Make sure to incl your name(s), the celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!***

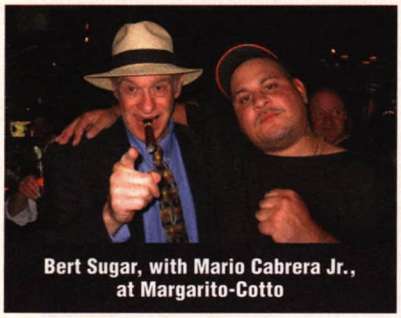


Loreto Garza, with Erik Killin, at Escalante-Perez

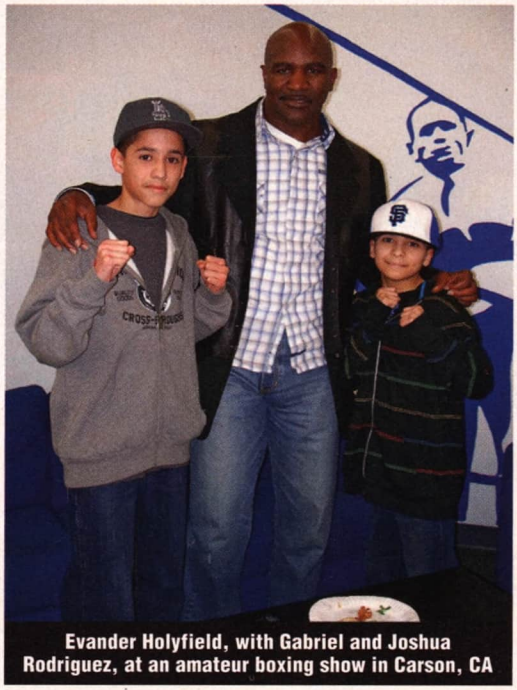
Holt McCallaney of *Lights Out*, with Raymudo Dioses, at Arreola-Abell



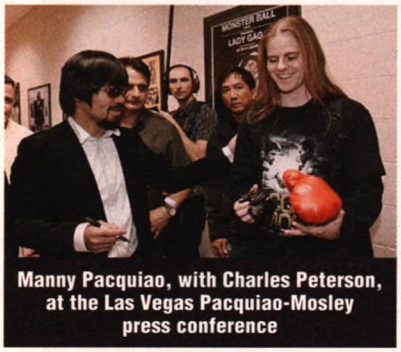
Al Bernstein, with Steve Zemach, at Miguel Cotto Media Workout prior to Cotto-Mayorga



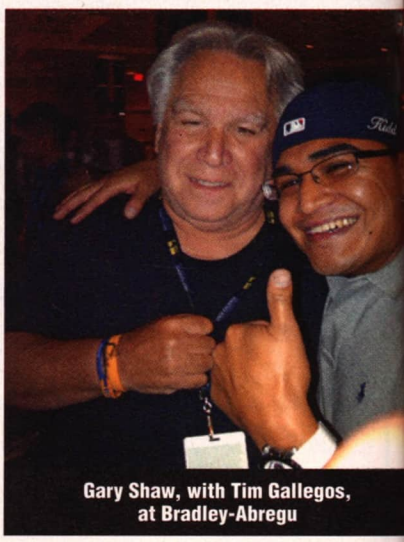
Bert Sugar, with Mario Cabrera Jr., at Margarito-Cotto



Evander Holyfield, with Gabriel and Joshua Rodriguez, at an amateur boxing show in Carson, CA

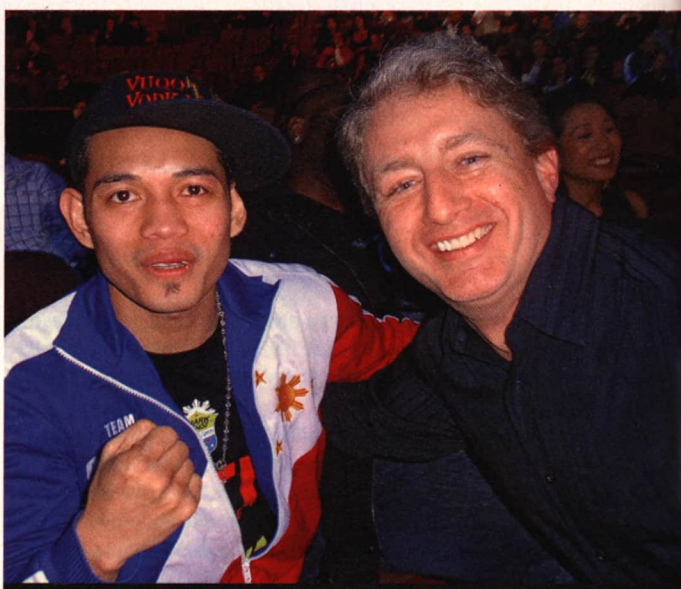


Manny Pacquiao, with Charles Peterson, at the Las Vegas Pacquiao-Mosley press conference



Gary Shaw, with Tim Gallegos, at Bradley-Abregu

Victor Ortiz, with Candi Muro, at Frank Erwin Center in Austin, TX



Nonito Donaire, with Jason Tremble, at Donaire-Sydorenko

Photos by Chiaroscuro Fotografia • www.chiaroscuro.ge.it

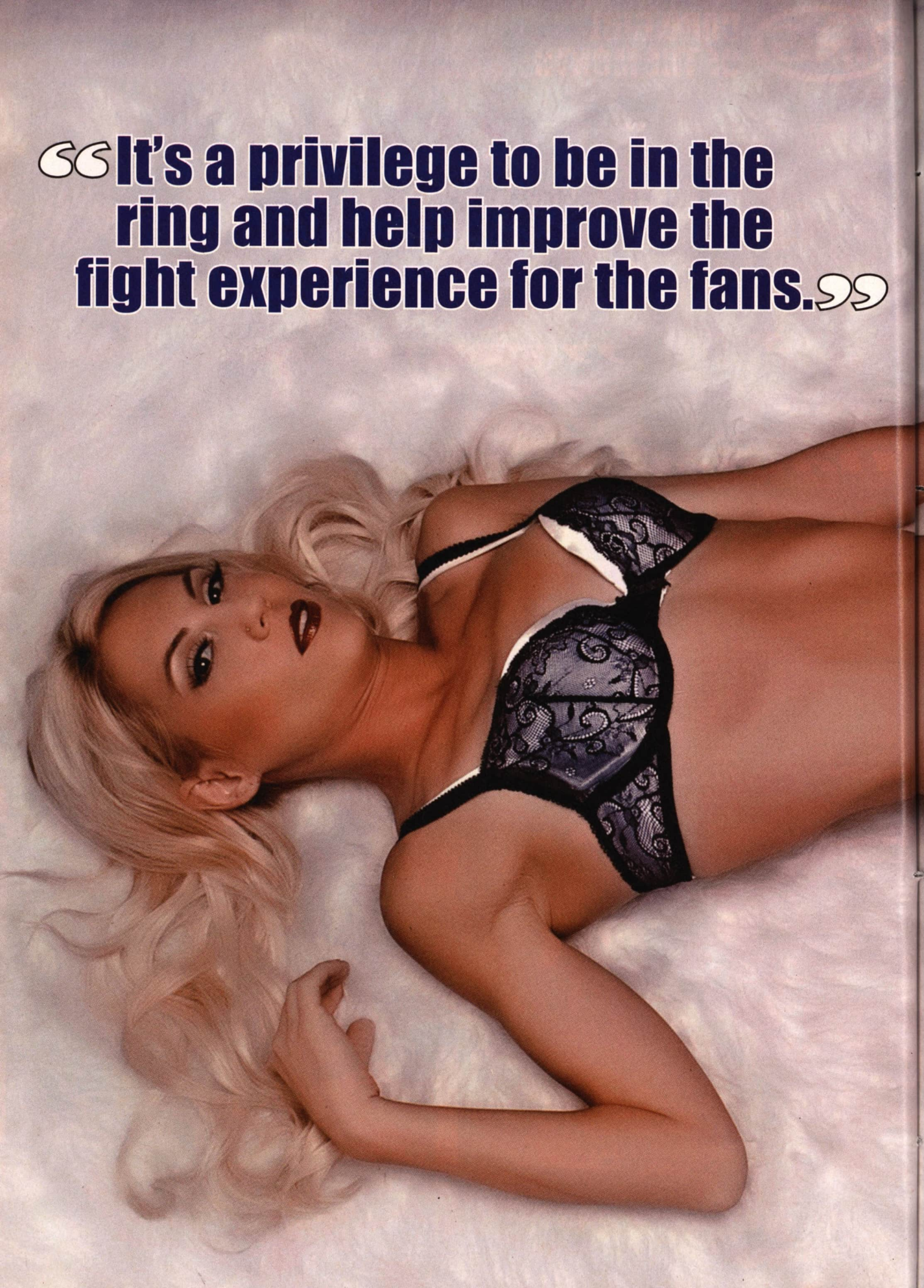
# "I feed off the crowd's energy."

# Daniella Robinson

## Tale of the Tape

**Height:** 5'7
**Weight:** 119
**Measurements:** 34- 26- 35
**Stance:** Orthodox
**Reach:** 26"
**Favorite Fighter:** Evander Holyfield
**Hometown:** Thousand Oaks, CA
**Current location:** Los Angeles
**Where you've seen her:** HBO *Entourage* (3 Episodes) Season 7 and 8, Ne-Yo music videos ("Beautiful Monster" and "Champagne Life"), USA Amateur Boxing Foundation Video, NBA All-Star Fashion Show and *Home and Food Magazine*.

**“It’s a privilege to be in the ring and help improve the fight experience for the fans.”**



*To Book Daniella:* Please go to www.DaniellaRobinson.com or www.facebook.com/DaniellaYonekoRobinson or e-mail her at Daniella@DaniellaRobinson.com.

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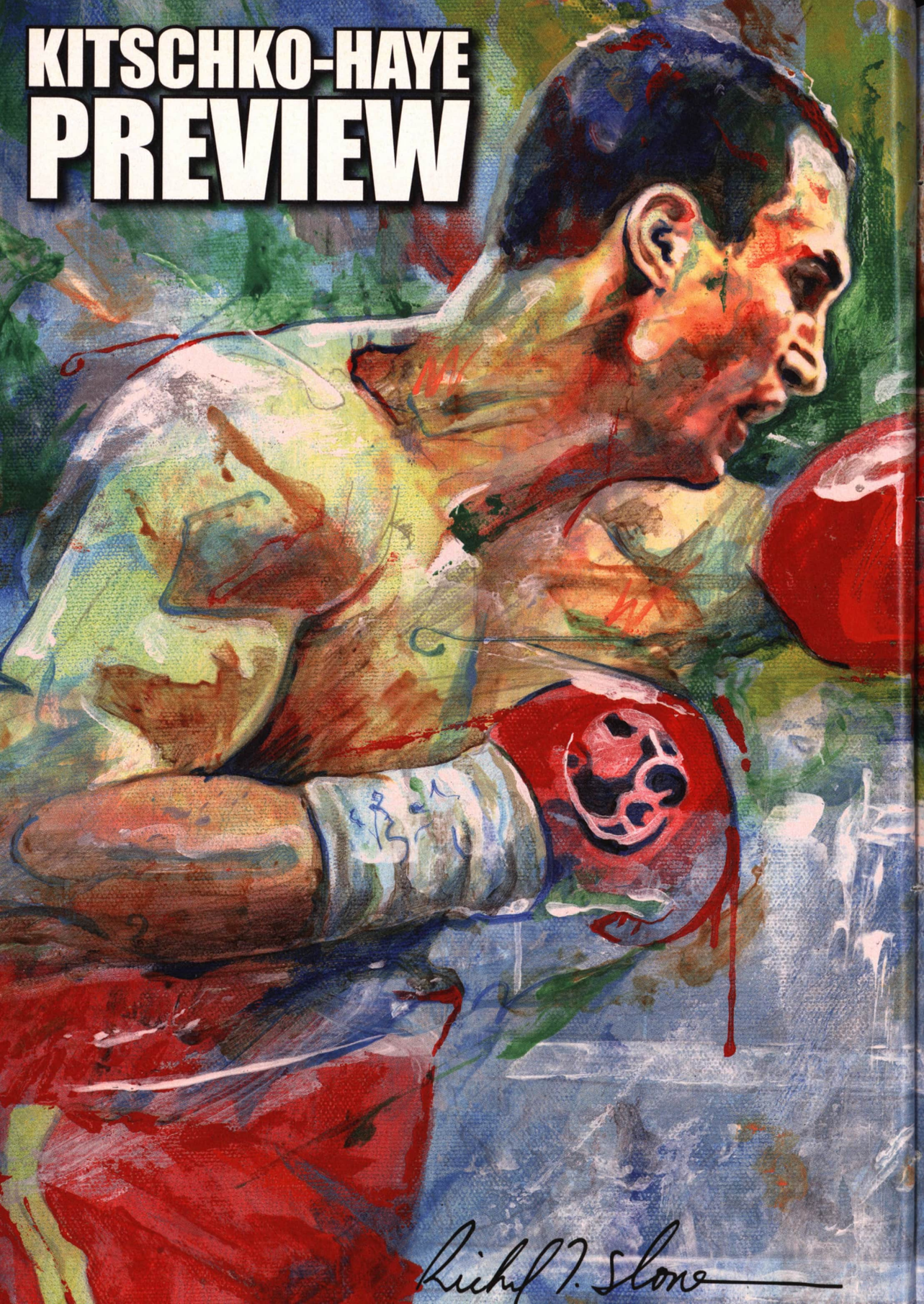
# KITSCHKO-HAYE PREVIEW




# The Fight We Have All Been Waiting For

**By Brian Doogan**

On a sleety December day in 2002, David Haye traveled happily but inconspicuously through the streets of London to the Third Space Gym in Piccadilly. Carrying his kit bag over his shoulder, the smiling 21-year-old cruiserweight from Bermondsey and silver medalist from the previous year's world amateur championships in Belfast was the breezy antithesis of the old man in the evocative Ralph McTell song *Streets*

*of London*, "kicking up the paper with his worn out shoes, in whose eyes you see no pride and, held loosely by his side, yesterday's paper telling yesterday's news."

Haye, however, was a young man in thrall of a long-held aspiration to be tomorrow's big news, to "show you something to make you change your mind," as the song goes.

Months earlier he had been forced to pull out of the Commonwealth Games due to a bicep injury suffered in his victory over Pakistan's Shaukat Ali in the first round of the tournament, but his potential as a pro had persuaded the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to sign him to an exclusive 10-fight deal. And the fight for which he was training—a cruiserweight contest at York Hall against British journeyman Tony Booth—represented an opportunity to make a convincing quick hit.

"At 6'3", I'm pretty much the same build as Evander Holyfield," Haye said several days before beating Booth in two rounds. "Holyfield won an Olympic medal at light heavyweight and a world title at cruiserweight before moving up to heavyweight. My focus right now is on boxing as a cruiserweight and taking the traditional route, Southern Area title, British title, Commonwealth title, European title, and then a world title. And ultimately I want to be number one. If I didn't believe I could be, I wouldn't do this. The cruiserweight division is what I'm focused on now. It's my only goal at the moment, but Holyfield became world champion at this weight and used it as a steppingstone. One day maybe I will do the same."

Nine years on and it will be the height of summer when Haye takes the ultimate step on a journey through streets in which his chin, character, nerve, pride, and quality have all been tested, but never so profoundly as will be the case when Wladimir Klitschko moves in on him from the far corner, a nightmarish prospect.

This may be the only heavyweight bout that matters, an antidote to the mind-numbingly sterile encounters of recent vintage. But still the smart money suggests that Haye, beaten only once in 26 fights, will be up against it.

"He is an undeniably attractive and a welcome arrival [in an era when] there must be

**AT STAKE**
It is only fitting that The Ring heavyweight championship belt will be on the line in the most-anticipated heavyweight fight in years. Klitschko won the vacant title by stopping Ruslan Chagaev in June 2009.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

a suspicion that, for the heavyweights, the current trend of unmistakable deterioration is irreversible," declared Hugh McIlvanney, the doyen of British sportswriters and a witness from ringside to the reign of every heavyweight champion since the beginning of Muhammad Ali's.

"With his athlete's physique and movement, his swift and heavy punching, and a personality that, if nowhere near as captivating as his most-dazzled admirers would have us believe, is engagingly positive and outgoing. There is a readiness by many to acclaim the Londoner as by far the most exciting fighter now at work in the heavyweight division and a potential savior of its appeal. But the British media's celebration of what he has been able to show us in only a few performances as a heavyweight is out of all proportion to the standard of opposition he overcame.

"Nikolay Valuev, by any ring criteria, is the dud of duds, a realistic contender for recognition as one of the worst champions ever crowned. He is freakishly massive, but that merely means there is more of him to look awful. Haye had every right to adopt the policy of unremittingly conservative opportunism that gave him victory in Nuremberg [and the WBA heavyweight title in November 2009], but his success in a sedating travesty of a fight could hardly be hailed as a source of terror for the Klitschkos. Nor could his disposal [in nine rounds in April 2010] of John Ruiz, who has never known a day in his long career when he deserved an adjective more laudatory than mediocre.

"As for Audley Harrison [whom Haye destroyed in three rounds in November 2010], if there were a championship for chutzpah, Audley could be backed against all comers. He frequently brings to mind the advice of an American friend of mine concerning another tiresomely noisy heavyweight: 'Put the gloves on him—that usually quiets him down.' There is no doubt that the heights of thrilling destructiveness Haye reached in totally dominating the world's cruiserweights justified the fuss stirred by his move towards larger adversaries and larger purses, and everything he has done since has reflected credit on him. But the feverishly eulogizing response offends the most accommodating sense of perspective."

Particularly when a man who has borne the burden of his demons and resisted his own requiem when so many voices were ushering him toward the exit door is confronting him. Klitschko is nothing if not a 6'6½" monument to resilience and perseverance. He has put together a fine body of work over 15 years as a professional

# VITALI ON STANDBY

**BROTHER'S KEEPER**
**Vitali could possibly step up if Wladimir is injured**

PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

If Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary-General, were not so preoccupied with more sinister events in Libya and more throughout the Middle East, he may have been called upon to bring about a resolution in the seemingly endless negotiations between the Klitschko brothers and David Haye.

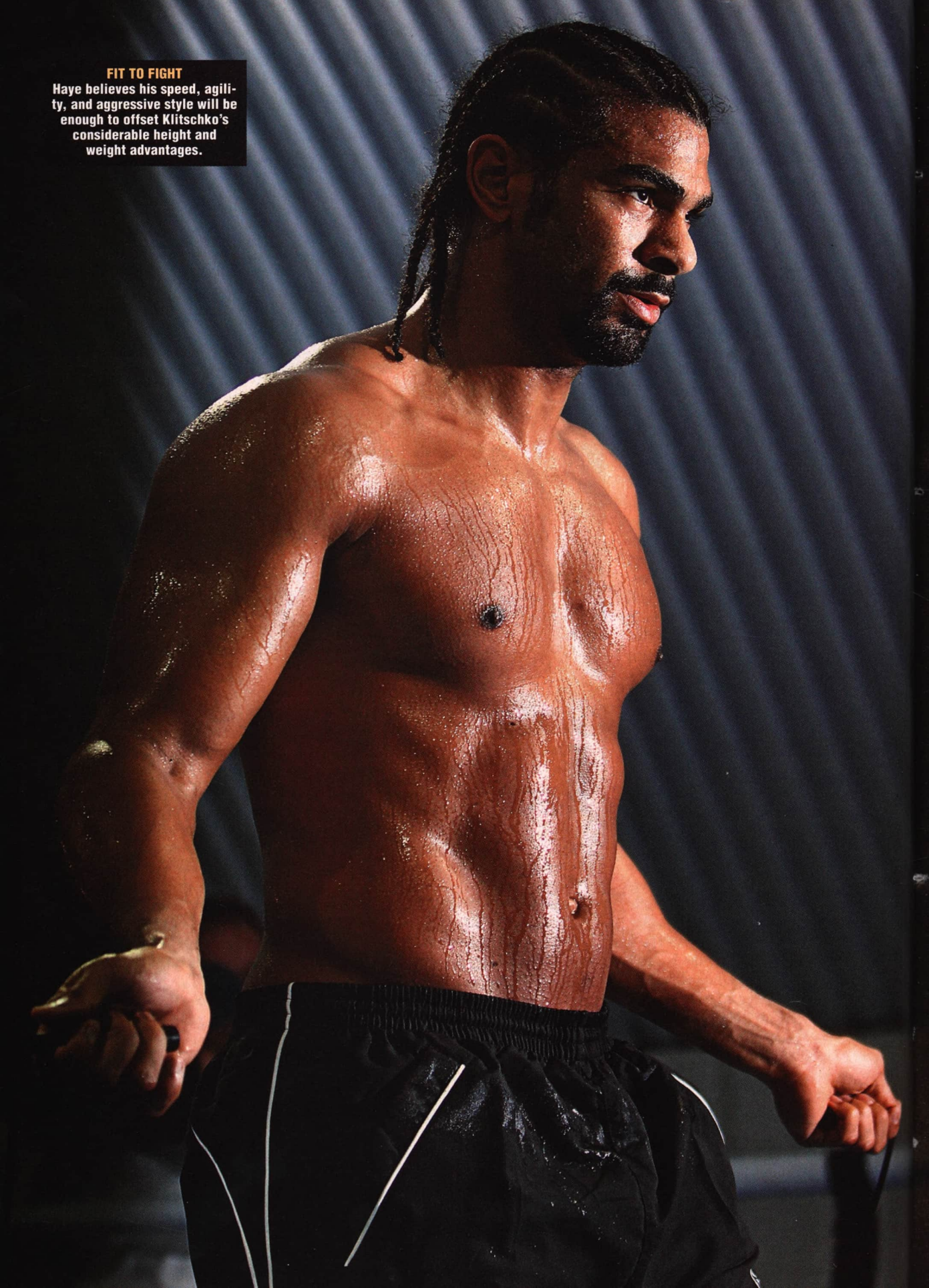
Although the date (July 2) and the venue (Hamburg's Imtech Arena) are confirmed, there remains some doubt over which Klitschko might be gloved up and which one of them will carry the spit bucket. The odds clearly favor Wladimir being in the ring when the seconds are ordered out, but an abdominal muscle injury, which caused the younger Klitschko to pull out twice from bouts against another Briton, Derek Chisora, could reappear during training. But just in case, 39-year-old Vitali is waiting in the wings, ready to step in to fulfill the anticipated July date, should Wladimir be further inconvenienced by the injury, even though he has agreed to fight Thomasz Adamek in Poland on September 10.

"Vitali is a tougher fighter than his brother, and he's proved this over the years. But I can outwit and outwork him," Haye insisted. "Vitali has never been afraid to take two punches in order to hit his opponent with one, but, with my speed, he'll be taking more than that.

"I respect him as a fighter and for what he's achieved; I know he's dangerous and I know there is a big difference in our sizes. He's 6'7½" and almost 250 pounds, and I'm 6'3" and around 215 pounds. But the discrepancy in speed will be decisive. Odlanier Solis knew how to beat Vitali, but years of obesity stopped him from being able to execute. He will unfortunately go down as yet another fat bum. I'm a real fighter, and I have Vitali Klitschko's number."

As for Ban Ki-moon's number, boxing's powerbrokers may want to keep it handy.

—B.D.



**FIT TO FIGHT**
Haye believes his speed, agility, and aggressive style will be enough to offset Klitschko's considerable height and weight advantages.

and, in spite of some fateful nights that rendered him, in his own enduringly vivid description, "a dead man walking." Stopped early in his career when he ran out of steam against Ross Puritty and again in 2003 when Corrie Sanders caught him cold and finished him inside two rounds, Klitschko's most shocking collapse came like a bombshell against Lamon Brewster in April 2004, for it appeared to demonstrate blatantly an innate weakness at his core. The subsequent paranoia that fueled his claims that he was drugged before he stepped into the ring at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas dripped like petroleum onto his own funeral pyre.

The younger Klitschko looked like a ghost on an unforgettably poignant afternoon as he sat in a dark corner of the La Brea Boxing Club in Los Angeles while his brother, Vitali, prepared to face Sanders for the vacant heavyweight title after Lennox Lewis' abdication, yet he has emerged from these humbling experiences as a dominant champion.

Klitschko has developed a style in which his long jab jolts constantly into an opponent's face and his heavy overhand right jars most of them into submission. Only Samuel Peter and Sultan Ibragimov have gone the distance in the 13 bouts since Brewster annihilated Wladimir. Moreover, when he won the vacant heavyweight championship by stopping Ruslan Chagaev at the Veltins Arena (a soccer stadium in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, filled by 61,000 people) in June 2009, he was not even hit by a single significant punch in nine rounds. It was more like an orchestral recital than a fight.

So how can Haye, who is exciting, but, as a heavyweight, unproven, reacquaint so formidable a champion with some of the anxiety-ridden vulnerability of old, a weakness which has lain dormant for the majority of the past seven years? Can Haye's undoubted explosiveness (23 stoppages in 26 bouts) and vaunted speed prove to be a penetrative and winning alliance against the reinforced defenses of a champion whose offensive arsenal has overwhelmed 55 of the 58 men he has faced, 49 inside the distance? Klitschko-Haye is a more tantalizing prospect than any other in heavyweight boxing today—by far—but can the challenger transform it into a landmark moment?

"This is a fight for which Wladimir will be genuinely excited because he is fighting a young fighter with a big mouth who says he's going to knock him out. I'm sure this will bring out the best in Wladimir," said his trainer, Emanuel Steward. "Many of Wladimir's opponents have gone into the ring with a mindset that left them content to survive. In fact, survival was the only thing on their minds. The last thing they were prepared to do was take a risk, the kind of risk that could leave them open to Wladimir's best punches, and I can understand why. But David Haye will go for it. That's his personality, and that's what he's going to try to do, which suits us fine. You see a fighter who takes risks, as he will have to do if he is going to try to win the fight, is a fighter who has a better chance of being knocked out.

"It is this kind of fight the public wants to see. David has earned this fight strictly with his mouth, and he will understand very quickly when the bell rings that Wladimir is in a class all by himself. We're prepared for him throwing a lot of punches, we're prepared for him throwing missiles, and these will make it exciting. But he will be facing a bigger man than he is comfortable with facing who can command the ring, not a guy like Valuev who, frankly, can't fight, who doesn't have the skills possessed by Wladimir. It should be a good fight, but Wladimir will win. And the jab will be the key."

For Haye, who pulled out of an earlier meeting with Klitschko in June 2009, citing a back injury, and also a showdown with Vitali several months later, the fight will be determined by less prosaic virtues.

"Klitschko is able to paw with that long jab against opponents who don't close the distance quickly, but I do," Haye insisted. "My ideal opponent is Wladimir Klitschko, believe me. I love guys who stand tall with me. I know everything he does before he does it. His style will gel with mine so perfectly that the public will be guaranteed a violent, early knockout. That's not a prediction; that's a promise. I haven't come this far to be left in the cold now."

But the 30-year-old Londoner, who will give away 3½" in height to Klitschko and around 35 pounds, may find himself in the far more hazardous predicament of railing impotently against the kind of bleak reality portrayed in McTell's song: "And in our winter city, the rain cries a little pity for one more forgotten hero and a world that doesn't care …" ■

***Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.***

PHOTO BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

# WLADIMIR KLITCH

# 20 Experts Pick The

**Compiled by Joseph Santoliquito**

*For years, David Haye would tease us with his talent and sometimes with his mouth. The British heavyweight has a way of antagonizing, and none were more piqued than the Klitschko brothers, especially after Haye wore a T-shirt with a cartoon depicting him holding the brothers' severed heads. Wladimir and Vitali didn't think it was funny, and, over the last few years, both have yearned for a crack at the loudmouth Brit.*

*It's* RING *heavyweight world champion Wladimir, 55-3 (49), who will get first dibs at WBA titlist Haye, 25-1 (23), on July 2, at the 57,000-seat Imtech Arena, in Hamburg, Germany.*

*This fight could not have come at a better time. The heavyweight division is in desperate need of an injection of excitement to get boxing's traditional glamour class out of its current moribund condition.*

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN/RINGSIDE PHOTOS

# KO VS. DAVID HAYE Winner

*The match could also rekindle interest in the Ukrainian brothers in the United States. The last time either of the Klitschkos appeared on HBO was almost 18 months ago when Vitali beat Kevin Johnson in a rather dull affair. The last time either Klitschko fought in the United States was in September 2009 when Vitali stopped Chris Areola in Los Angeles.*

*Wladimir had two relatively easy fights in 2010, stopping Eddie Chambers in 12 rounds in March and stopping Samuel Peter in 10 rounds in September.*

*Since winning the WBA trinket with a 12-round decision over Nicolay Valuev in November '09, Haye has convincingly beaten John Ruiz and Audley Harrison. The Harrison fight, however, was such a dud Haye needs a thrilling encounter almost as much as Wladimir.*

*In order to get a better handle on the long-anticipated match, THE RING asked an eclectic group of 20 experts from the United States, England, Italy, Ukraine, and Germany what they think will happen when Haye finally meets a Klitschko. Here is what they had to say:*

PHOTO BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

**Brian Kenny** (ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* studio host): "I know Haye says he got the 'right' Klitschko, but I think he has the wrong one for his style. Wladimir is quicker and more fluid and will have just enough to counteract the speed advantage held by the former cruiserweight champ. Haye certainly presents a challenge, but all the Klitschko advantages—size, experience, consistency, should keep Wlad THE RING champ."

**Bernard Fernandez** (boxing writer for *Philadelphia Daily News*): "I'm a little surprised that it's coming off. I thought it was the larger, European version of Pacquiao and Mayweather, with Haye doing a lot of talking about wanting the Klitschkos and showing on more than one occasion that he didn't. From what I've seen over a period of time, Haye's done everything he did to talk about wanting the fight, but you can't help get the sense that he really doesn't want to do it. I can't see him beating a Klitschko. I think 20, 30, 50 years from now, the Klitschkos are going to be much more appreciated than they are today. I see Haye being stopped in the eighth round and taking a considerable beating."

**Seth Mitchell** (heavyweight prospect): "Of all the fighters Klitschko has faced, David Haye has the best chance to beat him. If I had to choose a winner, I can see David Haye winning. Haye will use his legs and outbox and potshot Klitschko to win a decision."

**Tim Starks** (founder of the Queensberry Rules.com): "If there is someone I ever thought that could beat Klitschko, it's Haye, but I actually don't think he's going to do it. The Klitschkos can be outmaneuvered by someone with good feet and good hand speed. Wladimir's chin will always be an issue. But I think that Klitschko is going to be able to walk Haye down. He's also proven to be very good at tying up anyone who puts pressure on him, especially someone shorter than him. I see Klitschko landing a big right hand in the fourth round and Haye not getting up."

**Monte Barrett** (heavyweight who fought both Wladimir Klitschko and Haye): "I think it's going to be a great fight. We're due in the heavyweight division to have a fight that's worthwhile. From my perspective, I give the edge to Klitschko, but I have to say that, if anyone could beat Klitschko, it's Haye. Haye has deceptive punching power, and, although Wladimir is physically larger and more imposing, Haye punches just as hard as Klitschko. Wladimir has transformed himself. When I fought Wladimir 11 years ago, he didn't have all the tools that he has now. Dealing with him in 2006 during his training camp in Spain, I found he doesn't like being in uncomfortable spaces. David Haye is very crafty. I didn't give him any credit until I fought him; he's a hard worker. He's 6'3" and he fights even shorter than that. You never have a steady target, and I wasn't prepared for that. I couldn't make the adjustment. Haye finds a way to maneuver his way into punching range; he has a good sense of measuring. But I see a Klitschko victory just because of Emanuel Steward. I would like to see David Haye win because it would be good for boxing. The only way Haye can win is if he puts Wladimir in an uncomfortable space, but I don't see it happening."

"From my perspective, I give the edge to Klitschko, but I have to say that, if anyone could beat Klitschko, it's Haye. Haye has deceptive punching power, and, although Wladimir is physically larger and more imposing, Haye punches just as hard as Klitschko."

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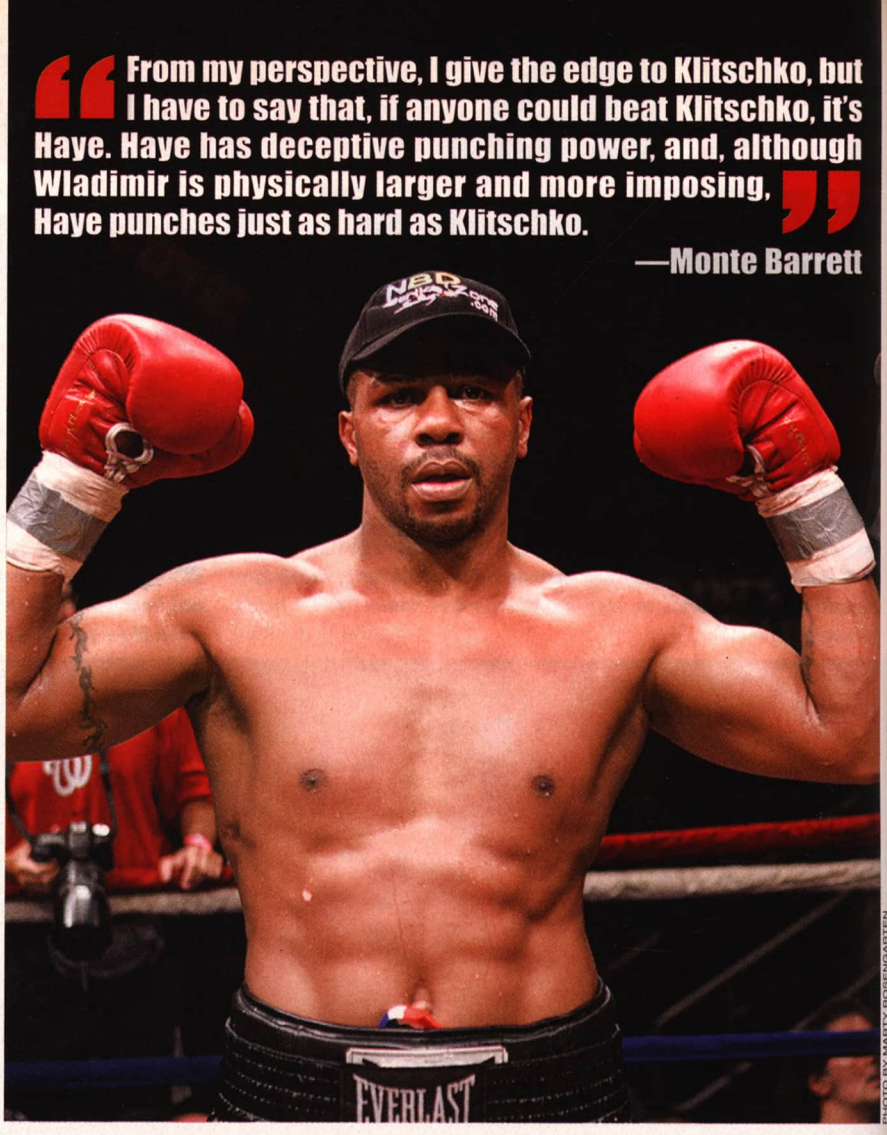



PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**Lem Satterfield** (BoxingScene.com): "The patient man will win this match. I believe that David Haye will attempt to move in and out against Wladimir as much and as often as he can throughout the fight and that he might even tag the larger man on occasion. Klitschko can channel his ire toward Haye into a focused attack. He will weather any storm and get Haye out of there in 10 rounds or less."

**Kevin Johnson** (heavyweight contender who lost to Vitali Klitschko): "They both have the same weakness, a weak chin. David Haye has never been hit by a heavyweight. Wladimir is definitely going to test Haye. David is slick enough to not get hit. So I would have to say David Haye in a surprise upset. He has all the skill in the world to get inside of that jab and beat Wladimir."

**Björn Jensen** (boxing writer for *Hamburger Abendblatt* and *Boxsport* magazine): "I think that Wladimir Klitschko will win by knockout in the last quarter of the fight. Wladimir will have to use his right hand to end the fight, and he will need to use it earlier than in other fights to outwork Haye and make him feel helpless. If he does so, I see him as the clear winner by knockout in round 10."

**Crivelli Riccardo** (boxing writer for the *Gazzetta dello Sport*): "In my opinion, Wladimir Klitschko is the favorite (but not so widely) against Haye. The Ukrainian is heavier, physically bullies, is more powerful,

experienced, and his left jab is a weapon that the Brit maybe can't manage. Again, Haye has a good punch that can create some problem for his rival but is not so strong in defense. We don't know Haye's reaction under pressure. Klitschko will win inside the ninth round."

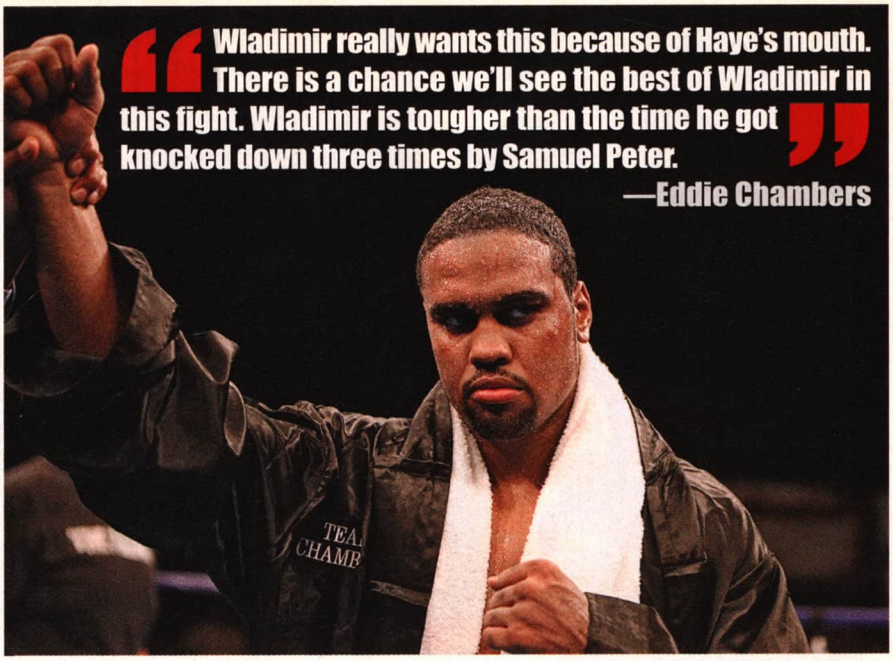
**Graham Maclean** (writer for British *Boxing Monthly*): "For all the supposed animosity between the two fighters, I cannot imagine Klitschko taking any risks here. He'll do what he usually does—utilize his left hand in the opening rounds, make it difficult for Haye to get close, and bring in the heavy artillery in the middle stages once Haye is beaten up and demoralized. My guess is that Klitschko will have it all his own way from the third round onwards and force a stoppage around the eighth."

**David Greisman** (writer for *Boxingscene.com*): "I see Wladimir Klitschko winning, but I don't see it being easy and I don't see it being quick. David Haye has the speed and explosiveness to give Klitschko problems, but Klitschko is more experienced and confident than he was earlier in his career. I see Klitschko using his jab and left hook in keeping Haye at bay and weathering some scary moments before catching Haye with the right hand in ninth round and stopping him."

**Kieran Mulvaney** (boxing writer for ESPN.com): "It's going to be hard for Haye to hit Klitschko clean. This could be an ugly battle with Haye showing flashes of fire as he attempts to land clean shots and Klitschko tying him up as he does so. Ultimately, the Ukrainian's jab and thudding right hand will wear down the challenger, who will succumb to the champion's strength by around the 11th round."

**Steve Farhood** (Showtime *ShoBox* analyst): "This is the most serious challenge Wlad has had in years because Haye will presumably take the chances that most of Klitschko's challengers haven't been willing to take. If Haye wants to win, he'll have no alternative but to take those risks. For that matter, if Klitschko lets the emotion of the moment get to him (you just know he wants to hammer Haye into small, undetectable pieces), he might take uncharacteristic chances. We can only hope. I say Klitschko gets there first ... unless Haye does. Klitschko with a straight right hand in the fifth."

**Tim Smith** (New York *Daily News* boxing writer): "People always make the point about Klitschko's fragile chin. And that might be so, but no one has been able to test it for the last seven or eight years, not since Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster stopped him. Since then, he has rattled off 13-straight wins, and no one has gotten close to checking his chin for defects. Klitschko has reversed that curse, and he is the one who is now doing most of the chin checking. That is what David Haye has to be concerned with. Haye will try to start out fast, but he will be blunted by Klitschko's reach and jab. And then Klitschko will lower the boom, stopping Haye in the 10th round."




**Tris Dixon** (British *Boxing News* editor): "We have seen so often in recent months how speed can be the equalizer for power, and that could be the case here. Neither have George Chuvalo-like whiskers. But I will go for a Haye stoppage win between six and eight rounds based on his movement and sharp shots as the game-changers."

**Eddie Chambers** (heavyweight contender): "I see Klitschko stopping Haye in the sixth or seventh round. Wladimir really wants this because of Haye's mouth. There is a chance we'll see the best of Wladimir in this fight. Wladimir is tougher than the time he got knocked down three times by Samuel Peter. Klitschko stops Haye in the middle rounds."

**Thomas "Turbo" Dierenga** (sportswriter and Head of Boxing, *Bild Zeitung*, *Bild am Sonntag*): "I know Wladimir Klitschko from his professional beginning at the Universum Stable in Hamburg. For me, he will be the winner against David Haye. Wladimir has much more experience in heavyweight boxing. Look at the number of rounds [Klitschko-273, Haye-102]. Haye's main weapon is his speed. Wladimir is able to answer with powerpunches and jabs to keep Haye at a distance. Klitschko is too smart to give Haye any chance. Klitschko wins by ninth-round TKO.

**Al Bernstein** (Showtime *Championship Boxing* analyst): "This is a very easy fight to predict. Until they actually step in the ring, I won't believe Haye will fight a Klitschko. Klitschko will fight tall, be measured, and then knock Haye out within four rounds."

**Vittorio Parisi** (Eurosport TV boxing analyst for Italy): "Haye is a very good boxer; he throws combinations, has fast hands, good movements, charisma, and power, but he also has a porous defense and a weak chin. I have seen him staggering by cruisers. Wlad has much more confidence than in the past, and, under the guidance of Steward, his defense has improved a lot. He is also taller, bigger, and has a longer reach. Haye will suffer the Klitschko jab. Maybe he will have some good rounds in the first part, then Klitschko will start to counter with his hammer-like right hand. Wlad Klitschko by late stoppage after a couple of knockdowns."

**Genaro Hernandez** (former WBC junior lightweight titlist): "If David Haye goes in and smothers Klitschko, he has a chance to win. On the other hand, it's very tough to go in and beat someone like Klitschko. I believe Klitschko will win this fight. He'll control the fight with his jab, his height, and his reach. I can see a stoppage in the eighth or ninth round."

**Final Tally:** Klitschko 17, Haye 3. ■

# OUR EXCLUSIVE ANNUAL REPORT

# THE STATE OF THE GAME

**By Eric Raskin**

Every sport has its ebbs and flows, and, if you're a true fan of a given sport, you stick it out through the ebbs because you have faith that the flows are coming. For a sizable chunk of 2010, boxing was letting us down week after week. It was a rough spring and a slow summer. And parts of the fall were shaky. The year finished reasonably strong, however, and, with quality fights on tap for 2011, there was some guarded optimism among fight fans. And wouldn't you know, as we go to press in late April, boxing is red-hot again, delivering such upsets, drama, and thrills that even *Pardon The Interruption*'s Tony Kornheiser has been forced to acknowledge the sport's existence with a hint of positivity.

Of course, by the time you read this, the pendulum could have swung the other way again. We might have just endured a rip-off pay-per-view, an attractive fight falling apart at the negotiating table, another lawsuit widening the Golden Boy-Top Rank divide. There is always another ebb coming. But if you're a real fan, you know by now that you just have to ride it out.

At the risk of sounding like an '80s TV theme song, you take the good, you take the bad, you take what's left, and there you have "The State Of The Game." In this annual section, we offer perspective on everything of note in the sport, the highs and the lows from the heavyweights to the strawweights. We analyze each division, one by one, with an eye on what's been going on over the past year and what we can look forward to in the immediate future. We take pride in putting together a massive section that is both enjoyable and informative to read in the moment and can also be looked upon by future generations as a time capsule of what was going on in boxing in 2011. And we take additional pride in offering the only article in the world that finds a way to discuss both Albert Sosnowski and Oleydong Sithsamerchai before it's over.

But before we dive headlong into Sosnowski, Sithsamerchai, and the rest, a couple of quick notes about the sidebars that you'll see accompanying each division. First, "Most Avoided" can refer to either a fighter who has been avoided recently or one who we believe will be avoided starting now. And second, "Deserves A Title Shot" means different things in different divisions. In divisions with a RING champion, the designation goes to whoever most deserves a RING title shot, regardless of whether they already hold an alphabet title. In divisions without a RING champion, we've named someone without an alphabet belt (yes, there are still a few such boxers out there) worthy of a shot at one. ***(Note: This section is based on results through April 18, 2011.)***

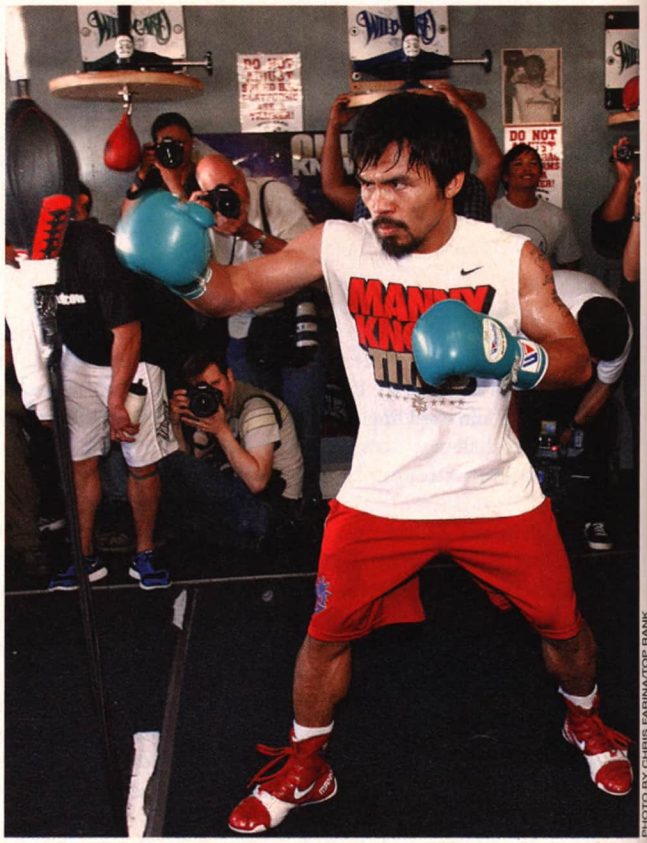


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

**BOXING'S ALPHA MALE**
**Pacquiao prepares for Mosley**

# HEAVYWEIGHT

Just when you think things can't possibly get any worse, along comes a fight like **Vitali Klitschko-Odlanier Solis**. Seriously, how cursed is the heavyweight division? For about two minutes and 45 seconds, it looked like we might be on our way to the first competitive Klitschko fight since the Berlin Wall came down, and then Solis injures his knee inhaling a little too strenuously and it's another embarrassment for boxing. Wrapping up a 12-month period in which an injury-plagued **Wladimir Klitschko** only fought once (against retread **Samuel Peter**) and Vitali somehow emerged as the healthy Klitschko but wasted everyone's time against the duo of **Albert Sosnowski** and **Shannon Briggs**, the Solis debacle was the proverbial last straw for a lot of folks on the fence about continuing to watch heavyweight boxing.

Here's the thing, though: It's gotten so bad it almost has to get better—and there are actually two Klitschko fights expected to come off this year that fans truly do want to see and that could conceivably pump a little life back into the division. Wlad will take on **David Haye** in late June or early July, and Vitali will square off against **Tomasz Adamek** in September.

Sure, both Klitschkos have substantial size advantages and will be prohibitive favorites. But at least Haye and Adamek are unbeaten at heavyweight, have earned their shots by beating other contenders (Haye topped **Nicolay Valuev** and **John Ruiz**, Adamek defeated **Chris Arreola**), and are entertaining fighters. If both Klitschkos win in one-sided fights, it helps their respective legacies while further burying the division. But if we actually get a good fight or two out of it and/or somehow there's an upset, then people might start buzzing about this former glamour division again.

Farther down the division's rankings, there really isn't much to buzz about. **Alexander Povetkin** remains on the treadmill to nowhere, fighting the likes of **Teke Oruh** and **Nicolai Firtha**. Arreola is destined to be an entertaining also-ran. **Eddie Chambers** and **Tony Thompson** both know their way around the ring but their ceilings have been clearly established. The **Antonio Tarver** heavyweight experiment is over for now. And some experts have expressed optimism over the likes of **Seth Mitchell** or **Tyson Fury** or **Kubrat Pulev** or **Robert Helenius**, but we'll wait for one of them to show us a little something more before we get heavily invested.

**Think About It:** We can probably all agree that the three best heavyweights of the era that preceded the Klitschko era, spanning from the late'80s through the turn of the century, were **Evander Holyfield**, **Lennox Lewis**, and **Mike Tyson**. So here's a fun trivia question: Who's the only fighter to get knocked out by all three of those legends? The answer: **Frans Botha**, who completed the trifecta by falling to Holyfield in eight rounds last April. And while we're on the topic of that trio of heavyweight greats, who ever would have guessed that the younger two, Lewis and Tyson, would both be inducted into the Hall of Fame before the eldest of the three, Holyfield, had retired?

**FAMILY AFFAIR** World champion Wladimir and WBC boss Vitali strike a pose

PHOTO BY ANITA BUGGE/WIRE IMAGES

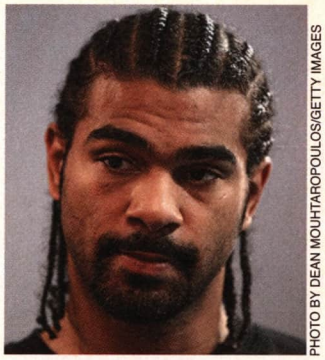


PHOTO BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

**David Haye**

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**Tomasz Adamek**

## HEAVYWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Wladimir Klitschko

**BEST BOXER**
Wladimir Klitschko

**MOST PROTECTED**
Alexander Povetkin

**MOST AVOIDED**
Tony Thompson

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Maurice Harris

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Wladimir Klitschko
-Vitali Klitschko

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Vitali Klitschko

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Tomasz Adamek

**ON THE WAY UP**
Robert Helenius

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Jason Estrada

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Tomasz Adamek
W 12 Chris Arreola

# CRUISERWEIGHT

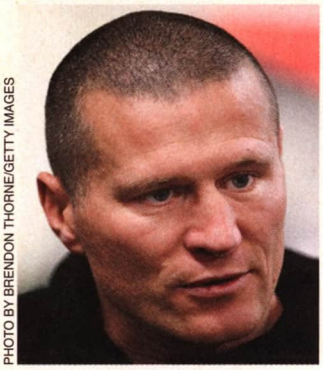


PHOTO BY BRENDON THORNE/GETTY IMAGES

Danny Green

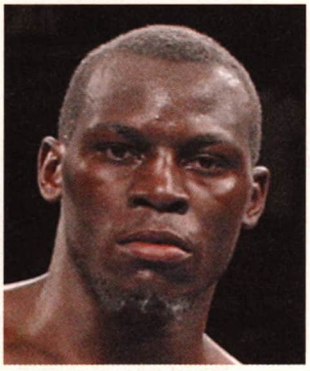


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Steve Cunningham

## CRUISERWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Denis Lebedev

**BEST BOXER**
Steve Cunningham

**MOST PROTECTED**
Lateef Kayode

**MOST AVOIDED**
Troy Ross

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Terry Dunstan

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Steve Cunningham
-Marco Huck II

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Troy Ross

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Ola Afolabi

**ON THE WAY UP**
Yunier Dorticos

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Matt Godfrey

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Alexander Frenkel
KO 7 Enzo Maccarinelli

If there was a prevailing theme in the cruiserweight division over the past year—you know, aside from the usual ones of American television networks not caring about the weight class and all the best fighters preferring to campaign at either heavyweight or light heavy—it was that inconclusive endings ruled the day at the top of the division. The top three 200-pounders from last year are still the top three 200-pounders this year, but all of them needed close and/or controversial results to hold on.

The number-one man in the division (as he has been ever since **Tomasz Adamek** left) is **Steve Cunningham**, who won his most recent bout, against **Enad Licina**, decisively enough, but required some luck to beat **Troy Ross** in his prior fight. Cunningham went down in the fourth round and appeared to be trailing on points when an unusual and rather grotesque cut opened up on Ross' lower eyelid, a freakish vertical tear. The fight had to be stopped, meaning "U.S.S." Cunningham remained afloat, but the waters were certainly looking choppy.

Right under Cunningham in the rankings is **Marco Huck**, who's coming off back-to-back debatable decisions at home in Germany over **Ran Nakash** (some said a draw would have been fair, but Huck won widely) and **Denis Lebedev** (could have gone either way, Huck won a split decision). At least there was nothing questionable about Huck's five-round knockout win over **Matt Godfrey** last August.

And third-rated **Krzysztof Wlodarczyk** won what most observers termed an out-and-out robbery over **Francisco Palacios** in April. With that coming on the heels of a distressingly close win over faded **Jason Robinson**, it's fair to wonder if the Polish veteran of nearly 50 fights is suddenly a touch overripe.

Two of the most interesting fighters outside the top three are among those who suffered the unlucky losses. Ross, the winner of the final season of *The Contender*, has a potent combination of power and skill but has struggled to land fights—and nearly upending Cunningham won't help that. And Russia's heavy-hitting Lebedev was poised, as of press time, to make his name a bit more known by whipping what's left of **Roy Jones**.

Speaking of Jones, his three-time rival **Antonio Tarver** is taking a shot at cruiser by facing the man who ended Jones' pugilistic relevance, **Danny Green**. The winner there wouldn't be the best fighter in the division but would arguably be its most marketable name.

As for finding the best fighter at 200 pounds, we don't need the whole convoluted Super Six-style tourney that was proposed last year but never came off. Just give us a rematch between Cunningham and Huck to crown a RING champion, and may the best man win (hopefully without too much controversy).

**Think About It:** The cruiserweight division has never produced THE RING's Fight of the Year. But in 2010, it quite possibly produced the Worst Fight of the Year. Was there anything more atrocious than Green vs. **Paul Briggs**, a disgrace that ended in 29 seconds without a half-decent punch landing? It resulted in charges of fight fixing, an official investigation, a $75,000 fine for Briggs, and, worst of all, a man completely unfit to fight being allowed to enter the ring. As boxing fans, we defend our sport whenever possible. With the Green-Briggs farce, it simply wasn't possible.

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

**SPLIT DECISION**
Lebedev (left) gave Huck a very tough time

# LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

In last year's "State of the Game," we declared, "Finally, the new generation is taking over at light heavyweight."

On December 18, 2010, **Bernard Hopkins** declared, "Not so fast."

Hopkins went to Quebec City to face **Jean Pascal** for THE RING championship and surprised nearly everyone by willing his then-45-year-old body to produce yet another astounding performance, earning a draw that most felt should have been a narrow victory against a man nearly two decades his junior. Had he won, Hopkins would have become the oldest fighter ever to win a major title. Instead, a rematch was scheduled for May 21, meaning B-Hop is getting an opportunity to make that record even harder to break by winning the title at 46 years, four months, and six days of age.

Even though Hopkins continues to stand in the way of the new generation at 175 pounds, we did see one undeniably positive development in 2010, as Pascal defeated **Chad Dawson** to claim the vacant RING title, bringing to an end a brief blip in the light heavyweight lineage. And despite suffering his first defeat—via technical decision in the 11th round, just as he seemed to be gathering steam—Dawson remains a part of the title picture. Should he defeat tough but limited **Adrian Diaconu** in the HBO-televised co-feature to Pascal-Hopkins II, Dawson has been promised the next shot at the champ.

The odd man out, for the moment, is **Tavoris Cloud**, an exciting slugger who posted the most meaningful win of his career last August when he outpointed **Glen Johnson** over 12 competitive rounds. With all the uncertainty over who will stand atop the division at the end of May, you'll see that in the accompanying sidebar we've selected Pascal vs. Cloud as our "Matchmaker's Dream." We simply went with the style matchup among Pascal, Hopkins, Dawson, and Cloud that promises the most entertainment.

Operating on the division's next tier are the likes of **Nathan Cleverly**, an undefeated Welshman due for his toughest test in May when he takes on veteran **Jurgen Braehmer; Beibut Shumenov** of Kazakhstan and Spain's **Gabriel Campillo**, a pair of solid contenders who have battled twice, with seemingly the wrong fighter getting the decision each time; and **Chris Henry**, a puncher from Houston who tends to fall short at the top level but makes for good scraps. Then there are a couple of wild cards: **Zsolt Erdei**, who has returned after a brief cruiserweight experiment and is still undefeated but continues to be maneuvered like a prospect, and **Ismayl Sillakh**, who actually is a prospect but one who looks to be just a win or two away from serious contender status.

**Think About It:** **Roy Jones** fought **Antonio Tarver** three times. Jones fought Hopkins twice. Hopkins fought Tarver once. What do these three former RING light heavyweight champs have in common, besides sharing the ring with one another? All three are currently earning money as boxing broadcasters. Jones and Tarver have the most high-profile TV gigs in the sport among fighters/ex-fighters, working for HBO and Showtime, respectively, while Hopkins works the smaller *Fight Night Club* series and occasionally works as a studio analyst for ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. Just one question: Why hasn't Glen Johnson (who fought Jones, Tarver, and Hopkins) landed a broadcasting gig yet? If you ask us, Epix picked the wrong fighter with ties to Jamaica.

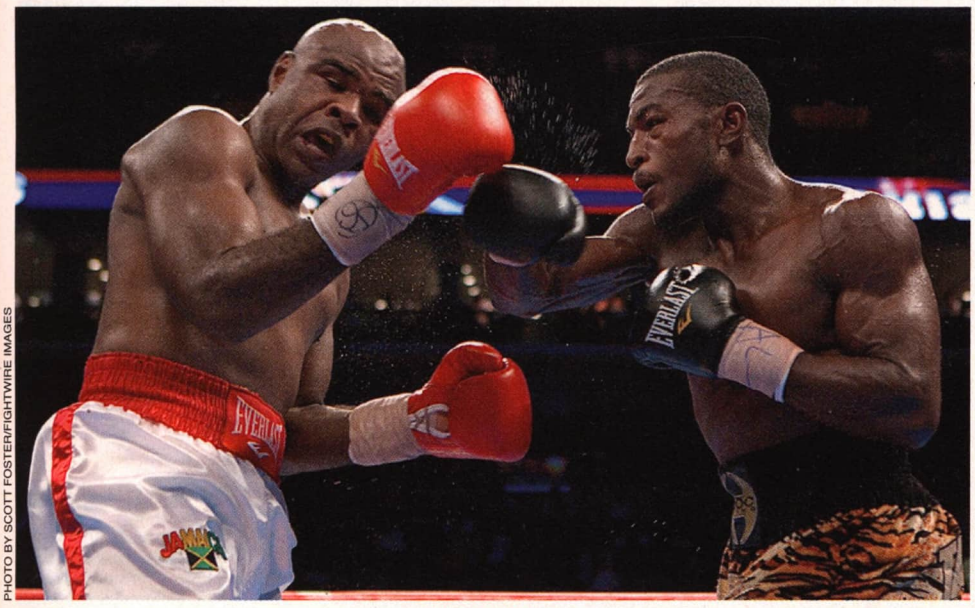


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**FUN SLUGFEST**
**Cloud on the attack against Johnson**

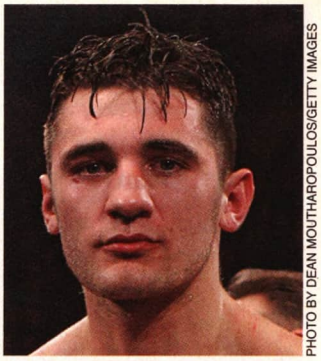


PHOTO BY DEAN MOUTHAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

**Nathan Cleverly**

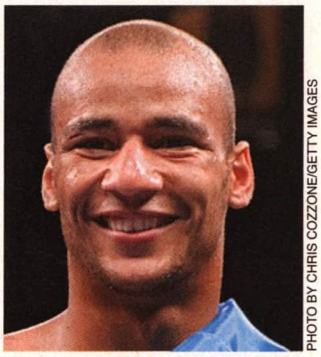


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/GETTY IMAGES

**Ismayl Sillakh**

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Alejandro Berrio

**BEST BOXER**
Bernard Hopkins

**MOST PROTECTED**
Zsolt Erdei

**MOST AVOIDED**
Chad Dawson

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Byron Mitchell

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Jean Pascal
-Tavoris Cloud

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Chad Dawson

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Tavoris Cloud

**ON THE WAY UP**
Nathan Cleverly

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Fulgencio Zuniga

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Tavoris Cloud
W 12 Glen Johnson

# SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

We said it last year, and we'll say it again: For all of its struggles and flaws, Showtime's "Super Six" tournament has turned this into one of the most appealing divisions in boxing. Some stocks have risen (**Andre Ward**, **Carl Froch**, **Glen Johnson**), some have fallen (**Arthur Abraham**, **Allan Green**, **Jermain Taylor**), some have more or less moved horizontally (**Andre Dirrell**, **Mikkel Kessler**), and, all the while, the fans have gotten to watch the best face the best over and over.

**BUTE RULES!**
Brian Magee crumbles at Bute's feet

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Lucian Bute

**BEST BOXER**
Andre Ward

**MOST PROTECTED**
Jesus Gonzales

**MOST AVOIDED**
Sakio Bika

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Robin Reid

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Andre Ward-Lucian Bute

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Mikkel Kessler

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Carl Froch

**ON THE WAY UP**
James DeGale

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Allan Green

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Mikkel Kessler
W 12 Carl Froch

And what was the biggest criticism of the Super Six when it first began? That one top contender, **Lucian Bute**, wasn't involved. Well, he still isn't, not directly anyway, but late last year Showtime wooed him away from HBO, positioning Bute to theoretically face the Super Six winner and clear up any questions about who rules the division. And in the meantime, we might get Bute against tournament dropout Kessler. Come on, Showtime, don't you know boxing fans and writers need something to complain about? You're not giving us a whole lot to work with.

Part of what's so compelling about the 168-pound class is that there's more to it than just the Super Six and Bute. For starters, how about **Kelly Pavlik**, the former RING middleweight champion who still ranks as one of the most popular stars in the game? Having supposedly gotten his drinking problem under control, "The Ghost" has the boxing world eagerly awaiting his comeback and curious to see if he can achieve elite-level success at super middle.

There are also plenty of up-and-comers who have our attention. New England's **Edwin Rodriguez** is climbing the ranks and, for what it's worth, has a McGirt and a Pryor on his resume. Olympic gold medalist **James DeGale** of London sure looks like he's for real, and he has an excellent test against amateur rival **George Groves** scheduled for late May. **Peter Quillin** has shown potential and is ready to start fighting fringe contenders. And **Don George**, though limited, is clearly going to be a fun TV fighter for as long as he lasts.

A quick note about one of the categories in our sidebar accompanying this division: "Deserves A Title Shot" was a complicated call here. Ward, Bute, and Froch all have alphabet belts, so they're out. So it pretty much came down to Kessler, Dirrell, and Johnson. Johnson has only fought once in the division so far and is getting a shot at Froch's strap. Kessler and Dirrell are both flawed choices since each man dropped out of the Super Six under clouds of controversy. But, hey, Kessler did defeat Froch last time out, so we're going with the Dane as the most deserving guy.

**Think About It:** Tuneups? Who the hell needs tuneups? Not Carl Froch. Look at this gauntlet he's been attempting to run the last two-plus years without a softie mixed in: **Jean Pascal** (W 12), **Jermain Taylor** (KO 12), Dirrell (W 12), Kessler (L 12), Abraham (W 12), Johnson (outcome pending). That's six championship-caliber guys in a row (remember, Taylor was still fairly highly regarded at the time, coming off a dominant win over **Jeff Lacy** and a close rematch loss to Pavlik). We honestly can't think of the last time a fighter had a six-fight run that tough. If there's one guy in the game right now who comes close, it's middleweight champ **Sergio Martinez**, whose last five fights came against **Kermit Cintron**, **Paul Williams**, Pavlik, Williams again, and **Sergei Dzinziruk**.

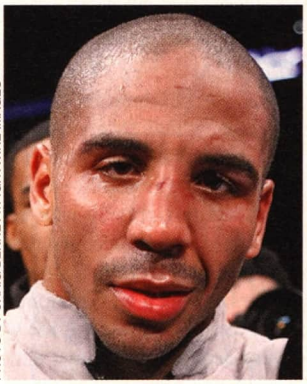


PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

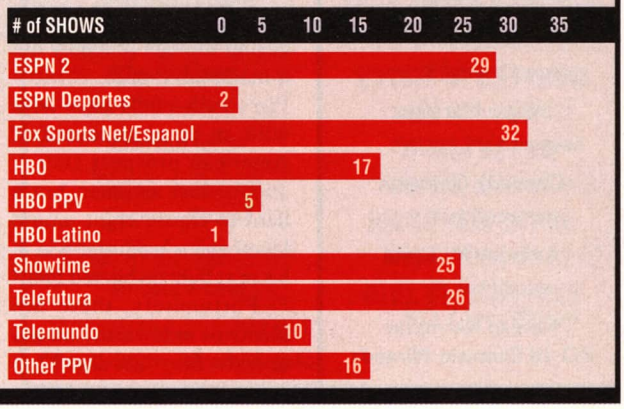
Andre Ward

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Carl Froch

## BOXING ON TV

*We are smack dab in the middle of a transitional period in terms of how people sit on the couch and vegetate. For the most part, they still do it in front of their television sets. But more and more, the computer is replacing the TV, and that's definitely the case in boxing, where quite a few bouts in 2010 could only be seen on the Internet, everywhere from ESPN3.com to RingTV.com. Since technically that's not "boxing on TV," we didn't count fights shown solely on the Web for this annual tally. But even without including them, there was a significant uptick in boxing cards broadcast: In '09, there were 121; in '10, the total jumped to 163. Even though Versus and TV Azteca stopped broadcasting boxing, Telefutura re-launched* Solo Boxeo Tecate *in May and Fox Sports/Fox Sports Espanol got heavily involved in the sport, thus accounting for the increase. Across the rest of the networks, the numbers were pretty consistent from '09 to '10. Here's a breakdown:*



# MIDDLEWEIGHT

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**Nobuhiro Ishida**

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/GETTY IMAGES

**Felix Sturm**

## MIDDLEWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Sergio Martinez

**BEST BOXER**
Sergio Martinez

**MOST PROTECTED**
Matt Korobov

**MOST AVOIDED**
David Lopez

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Yory Boy Campas

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Sergio Martinez
-Manny Pacquiao

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Felix Sturm

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Sergio Martinez

**ON THE WAY UP**
Gennady Golovkin

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Anthony Mundine

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Roman Karmazin
KO 10 Dionisio Miranda

LeBron James on the Cleveland Cavaliers. Will Ferrell on *Saturday Night Live* in the late 1900s and early 2000s. **Sergio Martinez** in the middleweight division circa 2011. What do they all have in common? They're one-man shows. They're super talents with hardly any supporting cast.

There probably isn't another division in boxing where the chasm between the top guy and everybody else is this wide. It's no coincidence that after each of Martinez' last two wins, you saw the same angle in every postfight story: There's nobody out there for this guy to fight. Martinez vs. **Paul Williams** was the scrap everybody wanted to see for divisional supremacy, and "Maravilla" prevailed with the Knockout of the Year in just two rounds. There wasn't a single middleweight out there whom anybody particularly wanted to see Martinez face next, so he eventually agreed to fight 154-pounder **Sergei Dzinziruk** and took care of the Ukrainian with relative ease, which again left everybody grasping for worthy opponents. Every desirable name was either a welterweight, junior middleweight, or super middleweight. At middleweight, there's Martinez ... and then there's everybody else. (And you could make a good case there should be six or nine dots in the middle of that sentence instead of just three.)

Now that we've established that nobody at 160 deserves to breathe the same air as Martinez, let's talk about the best of that second-rate lot of fighters. **Felix Sturm** is a right-handed Dzinziruk: good jab, experienced, not much power, and American audiences don't care about him. Germany's **Sebastian Sylvester** and Australia's **Daniel Geale** are set to face each other shortly after our press deadline, which will create a semi-worthy challenger to the real champ (though probably not a marketable one). **Dmitry Pirog** built a little bit of buzz with an upset knockout of American prospect **Daniel Jacobs** last summer, but a hard-to-figure eight-month layoff and a lackluster win in his next fight de-buzzed him.

Fortunately, there are plenty of noteworthy names at 160—they just aren't top contenders in the division at the moment. **Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.** has the fan following, and he'll have a measure of respect if he beats **Sebastian Zbik** on June 4. **Alfredo Angulo** is an exciting young gun who proved himself at 154 and might be a factor at 160 if he can get out of Mexico. **Nobuhiro Ishida** became an instant sensation when he blasted out **James Kirkland** in one round in April. And then there are the *Contender* alumni: **Brian Vera** is one of boxing's best spoilers; **Sergio Mora** lost to Vera but might have one good run left in him; and **Peter Manfredo** is so likeable that it might earn him a shot against Sturm or—gulp—Martinez.

**Think About It:** With Martinez claiming the first Fighter of the Year award of the 2010s, it marks the eighth decade in a row in which that award has gone to a middleweight at least once. Here's the list, going all the way back to the '40s: **Bernard Hopkins**, 2001; **James Toney**, 1991; **Marvin Hagler**, 1983 and 1985; **Carlos Monzon**, 1972; **Nino Benvenuti**, 1968; **Dick Tiger**, 1962 and 1965; **Carmen Basilio**, 1957; **Bobo Olson**, 1953; **Sugar Ray Robinson**, 1951; **Tony Zale**, 1946; and **Fred Apostoli**, 1943.

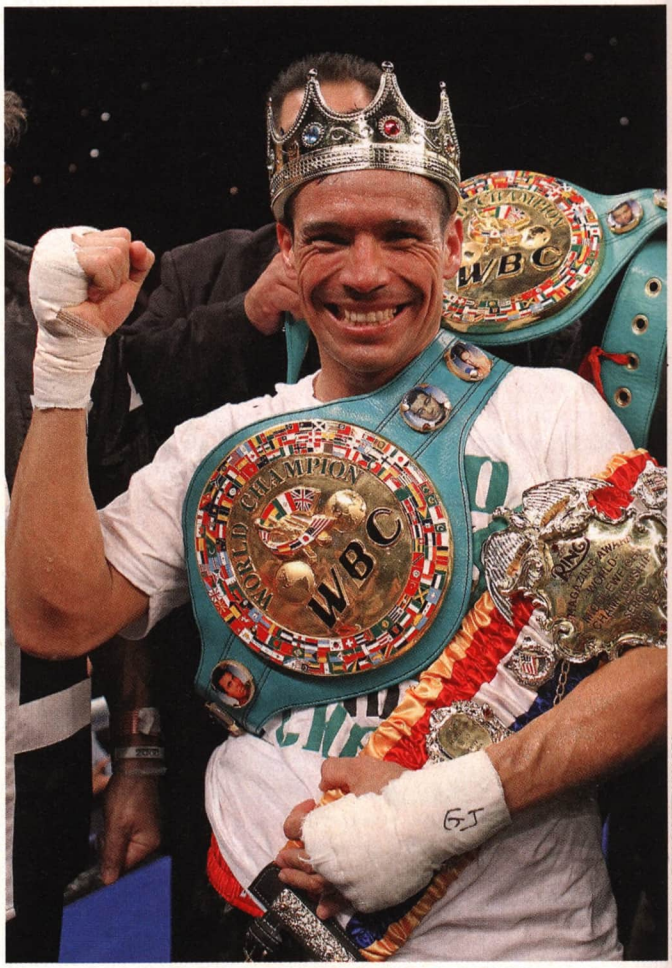



PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

**MIDDLEWEIGHT KING**
**Martinez celebrates spectacular kayo of Williams**

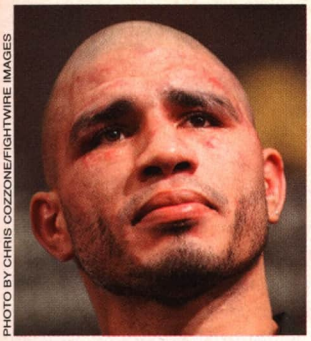


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Miguel Cotto

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pawel Wolak

# JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

As a "junior" division and not one of the old-school eight, 154 pounds is, by definition, a tweener. It especially feels like a tweener these days, caught between **Sergio Martinez**' middleweight division and the welterweight division that superstars **Manny Pacquiao** and **Floyd Mayweather** call home. Martinez was a natural 154-pounder but left because better opportunities a division north beckoned; Pacquiao and Mayweather have each touched down in the junior middleweight division to snag a quick title, and then returned to welter after a single fight. For whatever reason, boxing's top three pound-for-pound fighters just don't want to be junior middles.

But even without the services of those stars, this remains one of boxing's deepest divisions, full of name fighters, many of whom produce exciting action. At the top of both of those categories is **Miguel Cotto**, who seems like he might hit the wall at any moment but remains the class of the division for now. Cotto is headed for a summer rematch with **Antonio Margarito**, another past-his-best big-name boxer who generally gives you your money's worth.

**Paul Williams** might campaign at 154 again, and, if he can recover physically and mentally from his one-punch knockout loss to Martinez, there are some observers who would favor "The Punisher" to beat anyone in the division. **Kermit Cintron** hasn't fought since he dove—err, fell—out of the ring against Williams last May, but he's proven he can be competitive against anyone. And speaking of fighters who aren't active enough, **Alfredo Angulo** is an all-offense beast whose career has been derailed—only temporarily, we hope—by deportation issues.

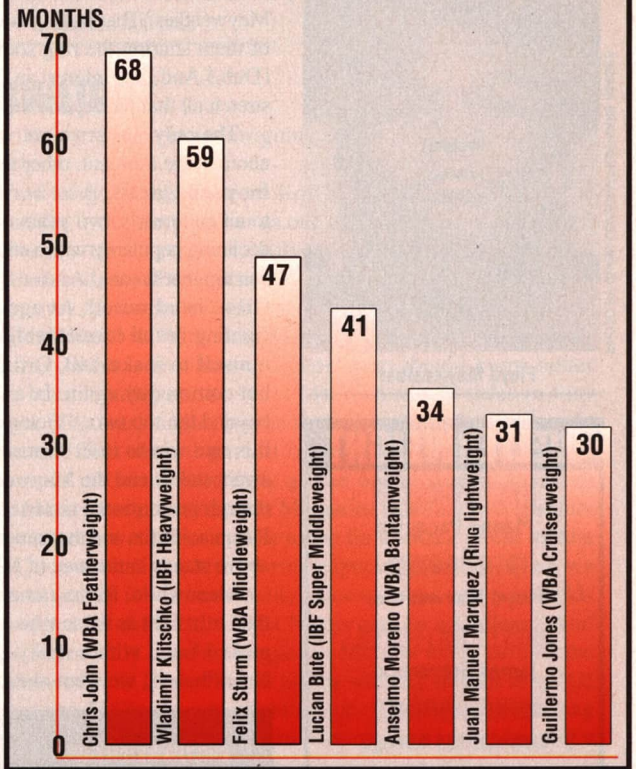
That's a lot of big names, huh? But we're just getting warmed up. How about **Saul "Canelo" Alvarez**, the hottest young ticketseller in the sport? Or fellow young Mexican **Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.**, who can presumably still make 154 if he trains hard? Or **Sergei Dzinziruk**, who has never lost in this weight class? Or **Cornelius Bundrage**, the former *Contender* star who shocked **Cory Spinks** for an alphabet belt last year? Or the bruising **Pawel Wolak**, talented Olympian **Vanes Martirosyan**, veterans **Ryan Rhodes** and **Sechew Powell**, or Cuban prospect **Erislandy Lara**?

As tweener divisions go, this one isn't so bad.

**Think About It:** In honor of Cotto, who has in the span of a couple of years gone from tattoo-free to more inked than the magazine you're holding, here are one man's picks for the all-time top five "they went too far" tattooed boxers. (Note that the list is all modern fighters because the tattoo craze has taken off so significantly in the last decade or so.) 1. **Mike Tyson** (Mao Tse Tung and Arthur Ashe were one thing; the face tat is another); 2. **Johnny Tapia** (was ahead of his time in covering nearly every inch of himself); 3. **Mikkel Kessler** (a massive, ugly tattoo that just doesn't look right on a pretty boy); 4. **Paul Spadafora** (what started with a simple chain around the neck eventually became Tapia-esque); 5. **Shane Mosley** (it's only one tattoo so far, but that's one too many for Sugar Shane's personality and image).

## LONGEST REIGNING TITLISTS

*The graph below illustrates the game's most established titlists (RING, WBC, WBA, or IBF), along with the number of consecutive months each has held the title. Three names from last year's list are gone: Hozumi Hasegawa fell from the top of the heap when Fernando Montiel ended his five-year reign, Celestino Caballero vacated his 122-pound belt to move up in weight, and Oleydong Sithsamerchai suffered an upset defeat to relative neophyte (or should that be neo-fight?) Kazuto Ioka. What's left is an interesting mix of stars and under-the-radar guys, true champions and mere beltholders, and active titlists and guys who are mostly just sitting on their straps:*




## JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Alfredo Angulo

**BEST BOXER**
Miguel Cotto

**MOST PROTECTED**
Damian Jonak

**MOST AVOIDED**
Sechew Powell

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Shibata Flores

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Miguel Cotto-Alfredo Angulo

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Kermit Cintron

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Miguel Cotto

**ON THE WAY UP**
Vanes Martirosyan

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Yuri Foreman

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Pawel Wolak
KO 7 Jose Pinzon

# WELTERWEIGHT

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao

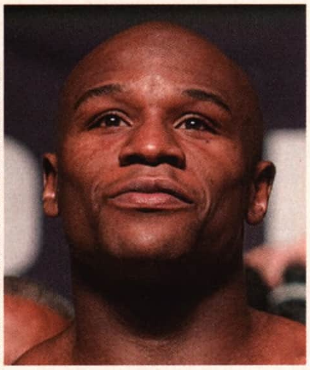


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Floyd Mayweather

It's hard to know what to write about **Manny Pacquiao** and **Floyd Mayweather** in this space. The former had a fight against **Shane Mosley** scheduled for after our press deadline, and, while we all *thought* we knew the outcome of that fight in advance, anything can happen in boxing, and the state of the welterweight division would surely look a whole lot different if it didn't go as we expect. The latter will have been inactive for more than a year by the time you read this, and, though we all suspect Uncle Sam will force him into action sooner or later, it's possible that "Money May's" prizefighting days are over.

So what can we write about Pacquiao and Mayweather? That boxing could really use the two of them sharing the ring sooner rather than later. (Duh.) And that interest in this division doesn't stretch all that far beyond the two of them.

The only welterweight worth getting excited about at the moment, other than those two pound-for-pound greats, is **Victor Ortiz**, who brought to an end nearly two years of soul searching and declining popularity with a stirring four-knockdown war against favored **Andre Berto** that ended with Ortiz' hand raised. At age 24, and apparently fighting in the correct weight class after killing himself to make 140, Ortiz is suddenly a very hot commodity again. In a division this suspect beyond the top two, "Vicious Victor" needed just this one win to insert himself into the Pacquiao sweepstakes and the Mayweather sweepstakes—though promotional rivalries stand in the way of Pacquiao-Ortiz, and the career uncertainty outlined above stands in the way of Mayweather-Ortiz.

Meanwhile, Berto came down a few pegs in the Ortiz fight as those who called him a carefully moved fraud with a shaky chin were validated. Nevertheless, we went ahead and selected Berto for the "Deserves A Title Shot" designation in the sidebar on this page because (a) nobody else without a belt deserves a shot, and (b) he did lose competitively to Ortiz while showing an abundance of heart.

The rest of this division is an international smorgasbord as notable for its difficult-to-spell names (**Vyacheslav Senchenko**, **Rafal Jackiewicz**) as anything. **Jan Zaveck** is your classic modern-day paper titlist. **Selcuk Aydin** and **Kell Brook** are both unbeaten but haven't proven much yet. **Mike Jones** has proven a little more than those two, but we're not sure if what he proved against **Jesus Soto Karass** helped him or hurt him. And we know **Josh Clottey** can fight, but he's been about as active lately as Mayweather.

**Think About It:** Boxing nuts enjoy discussing the topic of records that will never be broken, some of which (total career wins, total career knockouts, etc.) are unbreakable because the times have changed and fighters don't compete nearly as frequently as they used to. Here's one such record that doesn't get a lot of play: most career losses for a champion/titleholder. This semi-dubious record belongs to Hall of Fame welterweight champ Fritzie Zivic, who racked up 65 "Ls" in his 232-fight career. There's only one way that record is going to get broken, and it's if we become *so* inundated with alphabet belts that some veteran journeyman with a losing record gets to fight for one and wins it. Looking for a current welterweight who fits the bill? How about 37-year-old Brit Jason Nesbitt, who fought seven times in the first three months of 2011 to lower his record to 9-125-3. Give someone like Nesbitt a title shot, and maybe something fluky/miraculous happens and Zivic's record falls.

## WELTERWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Manny Pacquiao

**BEST BOXER**
Floyd Mayweather

**MOST PROTECTED**
James Stevenson

**MOST AVOIDED**
Luis Carlos Abregu

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Omar Weis

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Manny Pacquiao
-Floyd Mayweather

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Andre Berto

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Manny Pacquiao

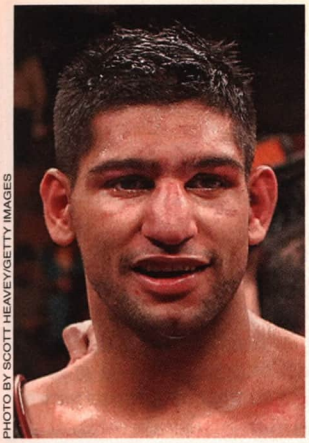
**ON THE WAY UP**
Brad Solomon

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Demetrius Hopkins

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Mike Jones W 10
Jesus Soto Karass

**WELTERWEIGHT WAR**
Ortiz redeems himself by beating Berto

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN



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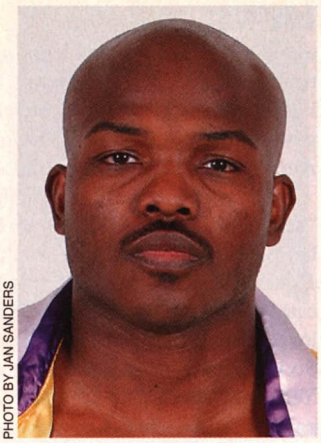
Amir Khan



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Tim Bradley

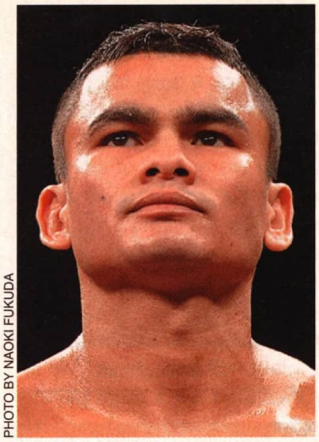


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Marcos Maidana

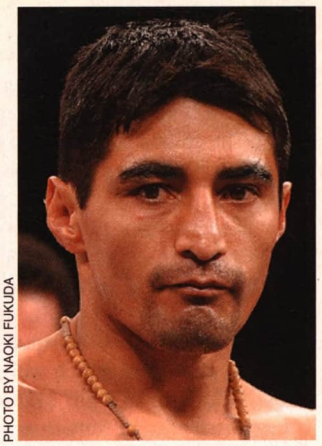


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Erik Morales

# JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

If you're looking to award style points, go somewhere else. But if you're just looking for the results you want in order to lead to a fight that determines true divisional supremacy, you've come to the right place. Both **Timothy Bradley** and **Amir Khan** have more or less successfully cleared the decks for a possible RING championship fight in July, both by scoring head-clash-induced technical decisions. Bradley's "triumph" over **Devon Alexander** in January was a miserable, frustrating way to kick off 2011, but "Desert Storm" did his job and won clearly. Khan's win over countryman **Paul McCloskey** in April was dull and came to a disappointing conclusion, but Khan won every second of every round. It wasn't his fault McCloskey didn't want to throw punches. If Bradley and Khan do indeed face each other, it may or may not be a great action fight. But it would give us a clear and undisputed champion, and that counts for a lot; we say bring it on.

And the beauty of this division is that it's deep enough that we can enjoy a compelling follow-up act. Very often in boxing, the top two in a division face each other and there's nobody else waiting in the wings (think Sergio Martinez vs. Paul Williams). That won't be the case at 140 pounds.

**Marcos Maidana** very nearly beheaded Khan last December en route to dropping a decision and should certainly be in the mix to face the new RING champion if indeed one is crowned. For all of the Argentine's flaws, putting fight fans to sleep isn't one of them. And thanks to Maidana, **Erik Morales** brings a superstar name to the 140-pound title discussion. Thought to be almost completely washed-up, the 34-year-old Morales lost a narrow decision to Maidana in April and is suddenly back in the title picture, and, though we'd make him an underdog against almost any other top junior welterweight, we know better now than to discount his chances entirely.

Speaking of big-name veterans, **Zab Judah** again has a belt in this division, back from welterweight more than seven years after he last held a title here. And Judah is trying to entice lightweight champ **Juan Manuel Marquez** into a 140-pound alphabet title fight, which would inject one more superstar vet into the weight class.

Then there are the younger guys: Alexander has talent and might be able to bounce back from his feeble showing against Bradley; **Lamont Peterson's** draw against Victor Ortiz looks solid in retrospect; **Lucas Matthysse** arguably deserved the decision over Judah last November and is a vicious puncher; and **Danny Garcia** is an intriguing prospect climbing the ranks slowly.

And lastly, there's **Andreas Kotelnik**, who doesn't qualify as one of the "younger guys" or as one of the "big-name veterans," but he is a tricky puzzle to solve and a man who has beaten Maidana and, anywhere outside of St. Louis, would probably own a win over Alexander as well.

**Think About It:** With Juan Manuel Marquez thinking about fighting Judah, a few boxing writers who should know better have been leaning on the "first Mexican to win titles in four weight divisions" angle, just as they did when Morales fought Maidana. This absurd pursuit of devalued alphabet titles in numerous divisions has really gotten out of control (peaking with Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito enabling two absolute non-contenders at junior middle to vie for a vacant junior middle belt), but doesn't the history ring especially hollow when we have to qualify it with nationality? Does anyone care who holds the record for most titles by a Norwegian or a Chilean? And more importantly, would Marquez or Morales really surpass the greatness of Julio Cesar Chavez just by winning another strap? Of course not. If Chavez were fighting today, he surely could snag some meaningless vacant title in a fourth division by beating a fringe contender.

## JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Lucas Matthysse

**BEST BOXER**
Amir Khan

**MOST PROTECTED**
Jessie Vargas

**MOST AVOIDED**
Andreas Kotelnik

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Nate Campbell

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Timothy Bradley-Amir Khan

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Andreas Kotelnik

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Marcos Maidana

**ON THE WAY UP**
Danny Garcia

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Herman Ngoudjo

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Amir Khan W 12
Marcos Maidana

# LIGHTWEIGHT

This is *almost* the perfect weight class. It has a Hall-of-Fame-bound, clear, lineal champion. It has a deep reservoir of quality contenders who are familiar to American audiences. The champ is clearly the champ, but the gap between him and his contenders is modest enough that any number of title fights would have uncertain outcomes. And most of the top fighters in the division also happen to make sensational action fights.

There's just one thing stopping lightweight from being the perfect division: the uncertainty surrounding the future of its champion, **Juan Manuel Marquez**.

Who will promote Marquez going forward, Golden Boy or someone else? And which weight class will he fight in? We all know he'd love to fight Manny Pacquiao for a huge payday sometime in the fall at some random catchweight, but that's mostly up to Pac-Man and Bob Arum. There's been talk of Marquez moving up to 140 to fight Zab Judah. And there's a buzz just starting to build for him to make a lightweight defense against **Robert Guerrero**, the obvious fight for him within the Golden Boy stable.

This is an extraordinary weight class, but it loses a lot if Marquez isn't going to be an active part of it.

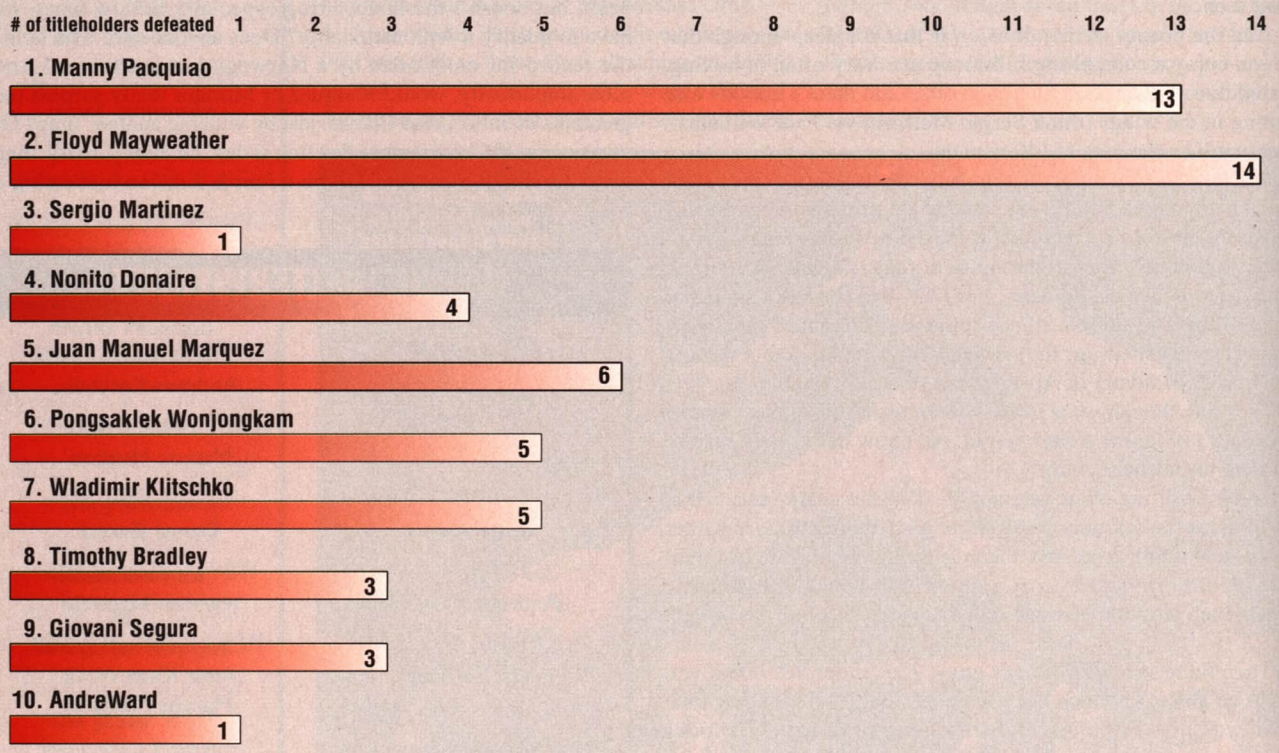
If Marquez does stick around, the fighters we'd love to see him matched against—and mixed and matched against each other—are many. There's Guerrero, who's coming off an impressive win over **Michael Katsidis**. There's **Brandon Rios**, who rallied to knock out **Miguel Acosta** in an early Fight of the Year contender. There are **Humberto Soto** and **Urbano Antillon**, who gave us one of the best fights of 2010. There's **Miguel Vazquez**, a really smart little under-the-radar jab-master. And a half-level below, there are guys like Acosta, Katsidis, **Antonio DeMarco**, and **John Murray**. Almost any way you match those guys, you can't go wrong.

Here's a fairly reliable sign that a division is compelling: The "Most Fun To Watch" sidebar is a brutally tough call. We went back and forth on four different fighters for that designation at 135: JMM, Katsidis, Rios, and Antillon. Katsidis has won this category a couple of times in the past, but the fact that he seems to lose every time he steps up is beginning to sap his fights of drama. So we went with Marquez, who not only produces Fight of the Year contenders with regularity, but he also delights those who enjoy elite skill mixed in with their high-contact slugging.

**Think About It:** How would you rate Marquez' reign as lightweight champion? On the one hand, it's by far the longest current RING title reign, having reached 31 consecutive months as of press time. On the other hand, Marquez has only made three defenses against two challengers in that time. Since defeating Joel Casamayor for the belt, Marquez stopped **Juan Diaz**, moved up in weight for a non-title bout against Floyd Mayweather, defeated Diaz again, and then TKO'd Katsidis. As a living legend who has delivered in the ring in all of his lightweight fights, there's sort of a sense that Marquez has been this great champion cleaning out the division. But in actuality, he has a lot of cleaning out to do if he wants to qualify as an all-time great 135-pound champ.

## TITLISTS vs. TITLISTS

*One of the ways to calculate a fighter's worth is to count the number of champions or titlists he's defeated. Here's how THE RING's pound-for-pound top 10 stack up:*



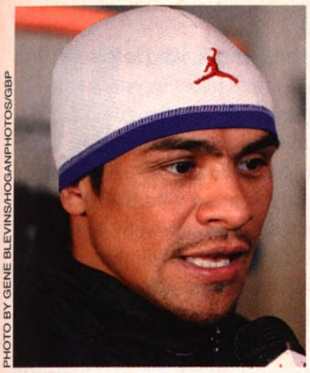


PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

Juan Manuel Marquez

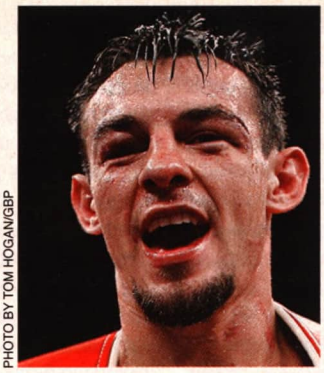
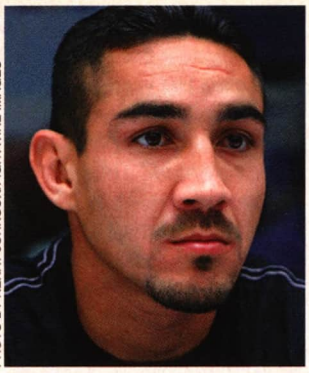


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GBP

Robert Guerrero



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Humberto Soto

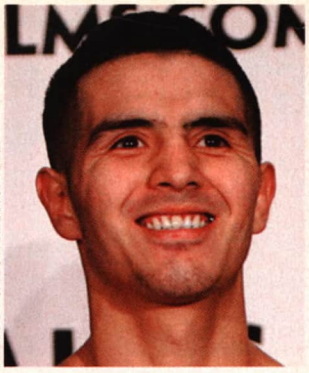


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Brandon Rios

## LIGHTWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Brandon Rios

**BEST BOXER**
Juan Manuel Marquez

**MOST PROTECTED**
Andy Murray

**MOST AVOIDED**
Miguel Vazquez

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Alex Arthur

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Juan Manuel Marquez
-Brandon Rios

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Brandon Rios

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Juan Manuel Marquez

**ON THE WAY UP**
Mercito Gesta

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Michael Katsidis

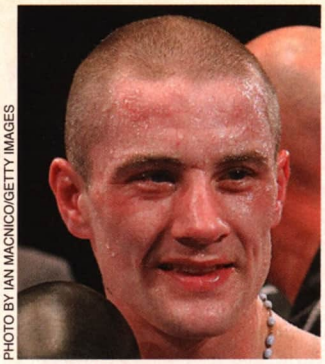
**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Juan Manuel Marquez
KO 9 Michael Katsidis

## THE CHAMPS AND TITLISTS BY COUNTRIES

*Well, it's official: The good ol' U.S. of A. doesn't rule boxing anymore. For the first time since we started writing "The State Of The Game," the United States doesn't boast the most titlists in the sport—and it isn't even close, as Mexico has surged to a staggering 11-6 advantage. American fans can take some solace in the fact that belts don't mean much anymore, and, frequently, the best fighters in a division don't have "major" titles (take that Pacquiao guy at welterweight, for example). But then again, if you look at RING championships, none of the six fighters who currently hold them are American-born. Maybe the money is still generated in America, but it's no longer our fighters who are generating the majority of it.* ***(Note: This chart counts RING champions and WBC, WBA, and IBF titlists.)***

**7 COUNTRIES TIED WITH 1:** Ghana • Indonesia • Kazakhstan • Philippines • Poland • Puerto Rico • Slovenia

# JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT



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Ricky Burns

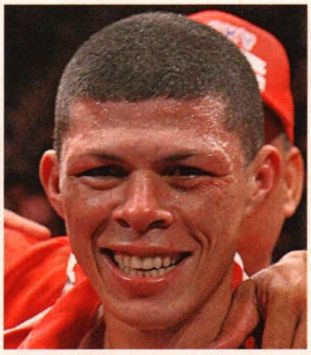


PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Roman Martinez

Looking at this relatively talent-barren weight class last year, we wrote, "You could argue nobody in this division is in the pound-for-pound top 50." We almost got it right. In the 2010 edition of "THE RING 100" that followed a few months later, **Jorge Linares** placed 44th (based more on his potential than actual accomplishment), and the next 130-pounder to be found was **Mzonke Fana** all the way down at 84.

There simply aren't any great fighters here for the second year in a row. But there are a handful of exciting warriors, a few guys with interesting storylines, and a fair amount of even matchups to be made. Hey, not every division can be loaded with pay-per-view headliners and future Hall of Famers. We just have to take the junior light class for what it is.

The rankings at the top aren't clear cut; you could make a decent case for putting any of three beltholders—Fana, **Ricky Burns**, or **Takashi Uchiyama**—at number one. South Africa's Fana has the deepest resume, and, though it's a resume that features a few stumbles, one of those stumbles was avenged last September when he outpointed **Cassius Baloyi** to reclaim an alphabet belt. Burns is an all-action Scottish battler on a 16-fight win streak highlighted by a Fight of the Year candidate against **Roman "Rocky" Martinez**. And Uchiyama is a Japanese fighter with serious punching power—though we aren't happy that his first three alphabet defenses have all come against complete unknowns.

The next tier of 130-pounders features good, solid fighters for whom you can't make a case for the top spot. There's Martinez, who lost a close one to Burns. There's **Juan Carlos Salgado**, who lost a stunner to Uchiyama. There's the gifted Linares, who's been rebuilding slowly since his one-round knockout loss to Salgado in '09. And there's **Jorge Solis**, a sturdy veteran who didn't look so sturdy last time out, as a featherweight against the magnificently athletic Yuriorkis Gamboa.

And the division has a decent third tier as well. **Takahiro Ao** has a belt, though his resume is still rather sparse. **Jason Litzau** is a TV-friendly American fighter who shocked Celestino Caballero last time out. **Adrien Broner** is an American fighter who didn't seem so TV-friendly in his HBO debut, but we can't write him off yet. And once-beaten **Argenis Mendez** could crash the top of the ratings if he succeeds against Fana in South Africa in June.

**Think About It:** You would think a hopelessly weak division wouldn't win a whole lot of year-end awards, but junior lightweight has now given us THE RING's Upset of the Year the last two years in a row, with Litzau-Caballero following Salgado's '09 shocker against Linares. Curious when the last time was that one division hosted the Upsets of the Year back to back? You have to go back more than two decades to 1987 and '88. First Sugar Ray Leonard outpointed Marvin Hagler for the middleweight championship, then Iran Barkley stunned the boxing world by knocking out Tommy Hearns for a 160-pound belt. The Salgado-Linares-Litzau-Caballero combo presents a wee bit less name value than Leonard-Hagler-Barkley-Hearns, but they were spectacular upsets just the same.

## JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Takashi Uchiyama

**BEST BOXER**
Mzonke Fana

**MOST PROTECTED**
Marco Lopez

**MOST AVOIDED**
Gamaliel Diaz

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Emmanuel Lucero

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Ricky Burns
-Roman Martinez II

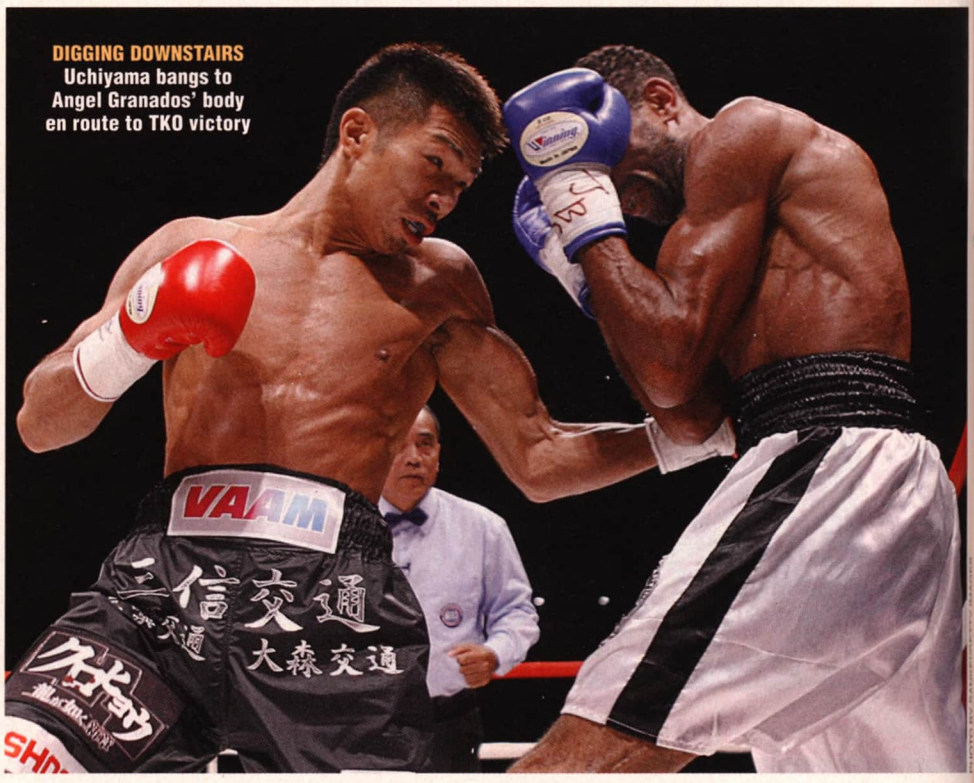
**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Roman Martinez

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Roman Martinez

**ON THE WAY UP**
Will Tomlinson

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Cassius Baloyi

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Ricky Burns
W 12 Roman Martinez




**DIGGING DOWNSTAIRS**
Uchiyama bangs to Angel Granados' body en route to TKO victory

# FEATHERWEIGHT

Well, the old saying was proven accurate: When you assume, you make an ass out of Bob Arum and **Juan Manuel Lopez**.

For about a year-and-a-half, everything that happened in the featherweight division was part of a slow build toward Lopez vs. **Yuriorkis Gamboa**, the first true superfight at 126 pounds since the classic 2004 draw between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez. In March, Gamboa did his part with a jaw-dropping four-round demolition of Jorge Solis. A few weeks later, it was Lopez' turn against **Orlando Salido**. But in a candidate for both Fight of the Year and Upset of the Year, the 11-loss veteran Salido scored an eighth-round TKO over Lopez, and it was bye-bye superfight.

So where does this leave everyone? It leaves Lopez in need of some rebuilding and possibly on the road to Arturo Gatti-esque "exciting fighter with no defense who loses as often as he wins" territory. It leaves Salido positioned for a payday, though probably not against Gamboa, since the Cuban already beat him easily once; more likely, that payday comes in a rematch with Lopez. And it leaves Gamboa looking for a new superfight opponent. Some will suggest **Chris John**, since that would fill THE RING's vacancy at 126. But does Gamboa vs. John really excite you? We have a better idea: Gamboa vs. Nonito Donaire. As long as Donaire would be a comfortable favorite over anyone else at bantamweight, the most compelling option for the fans would be for him to challenge Gamboa in a battle of absurdly athletic speedsters. It might not be the most logical next step from Donaire's perspective, but it's a dream fight for hardcore fans.

Two quick additional notes on Gamboa before we move on to the rest of the division. First, we were tempted to call him "Best Boxer" in the accompanying sidebar, but his technique and defense are so flawed that we felt a little more comfortable with John. And second, we labeled Gamboa "Most Avoided" because, even though you earn a decent payday for fighting him, he's so scary-good that most featherweights aren't dying to face him. Plus, there's a school of thought that Arum was intentionally keeping JuanMa away from him for as long as he could.

The rest of this division is deep with veteran names, including some of the most entertaining fighters in the sport. **Daniel Ponce De Leon** has added technique but is still primarily a slugger. **Rafael Marquez** seems, based on his showing against Lopez, to have one or two more good fights in him. **Cristobal Cruz'** alphabet title loss to Salido looks a little better in retrospect. **Jhonny Gonzalez** is back in the mix after a minor-upset kayo of **Hozumi Hasegawa** in April.

And if you're looking for a non-veteran name (with a well-known boxing surname), **Miguel Angel "Mikey" Garcia** is perhaps the division's most appealing up-and-comer. We know what happens when you assume, so we're not going to make any big assumptions about him, but he appears to be a guy capable of cracking the division's top five in the next year or so.

**Think About It:** Here's an unusual streak for you: Jhonny Gonzalez has gone six rounds or less in each of his last 14 fights. Part of what makes the streak so unusual is that immediately before that streak started in 2008, Gonzalez had a streak of seven straight fights that lasted seven rounds or more. Has there been a change in Gonzalez' fighting philosophy? Does he now double park outside when he fights? Did he just decide one day that he wanted everyone to call him "Speedy" Gonzalez? The answer is unclear. But the fact remains that his last 14 fights have lasted a total of 40 rounds, less than three rounds per fight. If you like knockouts, you're loving this phase of Gonzalez' career.

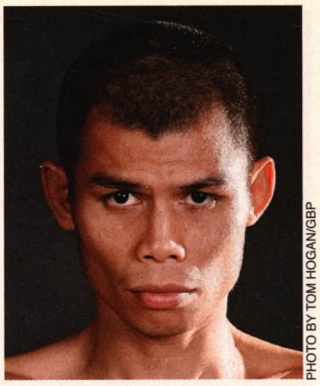


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GBP

Chris John

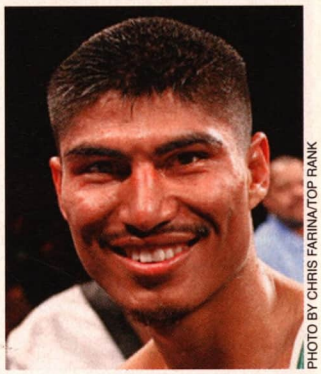


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Mikey Garcia

**WALKOVER**
Solis just couldn't stand up under Gamboa's firepower

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

## FEATHERWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Yuriorkis Gamboa

**BEST BOXER**
Chris John

**MOST PROTECTED**
Alberto Servidei

**MOST AVOIDED**
Yuriorkis Gamboa

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Mauricio Pastrana

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Yuriorkis Gamboa
-Nonito Donaire

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Juan Manuel Lopez

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Juan Manuel Lopez

**ON THE WAY UP**
Mikey Garcia

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Antonio Escalante

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Juan Manuel Lopez
KO 8 Rafael Marquez

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## JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

With all the horrors that the people of Japan have experienced so far in 2011, we're going to go out of our way to make them feel good by shining a teeny tiny light on something positive: When it comes to 122-pound boxers, they're kicking the rest of the world's collective ass.

The top three fighters in THE RING's rankings all call Japan home. The number-one spot belongs clearly to **Toshiaki Nishioka**, a four-time unsuccessful bantamweight title challenger who had much better luck when he moved up to junior feather and has now held a belt here for more than two years. His latest defenses came against anonymous Filipino Balweg Bangoyan (KO 5), world-class Brit Rendall Munroe (W 12), and unknown Argentine Mauricio Munoz (KO 9).

Directly below Nishioka sit **Akifumi Shimoda** and **Ryol Li Lee**, the former of whom took a belt from the latter in an exciting four-knockdown affair in January. Both fighters went down in the third, and Lee also hit the deck in the fifth and eighth, as Shimoda came from out of nowhere to beat Lee (who himself came from out of nowhere to defeat **Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym** three months earlier).

There are also a few 122-pounders outside Asia worth discussing, including some new blood campaigning in North America and making the division considerably more interesting. Leading the way are two unbeaten alphabet beltholders (it sure does seem like everyone in this division has a belt, doesn't it?), **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** and **Guillermo Rigondeaux**. Vazquez is turning into something of a knockout artist and was due to get some exposure against faded vet Jorge Arce on the Pacquiao-Mosley undercard. Rigondeaux is a Cuban amateur legend who has been a bit inconsistent in his first eight pro fights, but he certainly has the pedigree to reach the top.

Then there are two Americans worth getting excited about, in large part because both have shown they can be dynamic in the ring. California's **Rico Ramos** is undefeated through 19 fights and mostly looking good against a series of tough gatekeepers. And Philadelphia's **Teon Kennedy** is unbeaten through 18 and, after an impressive win in March against fellow prospect **Jorge Diaz**, seems on the right path following a tragic victory over Francisco Rodriguez in '09.

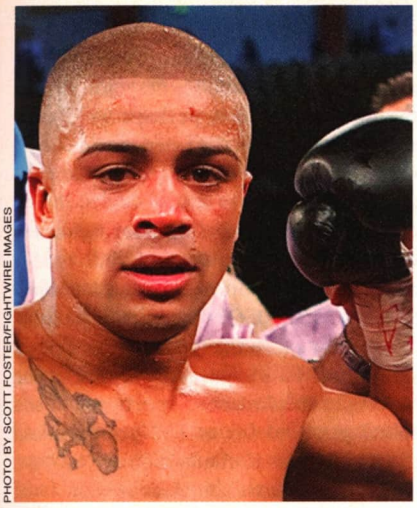


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

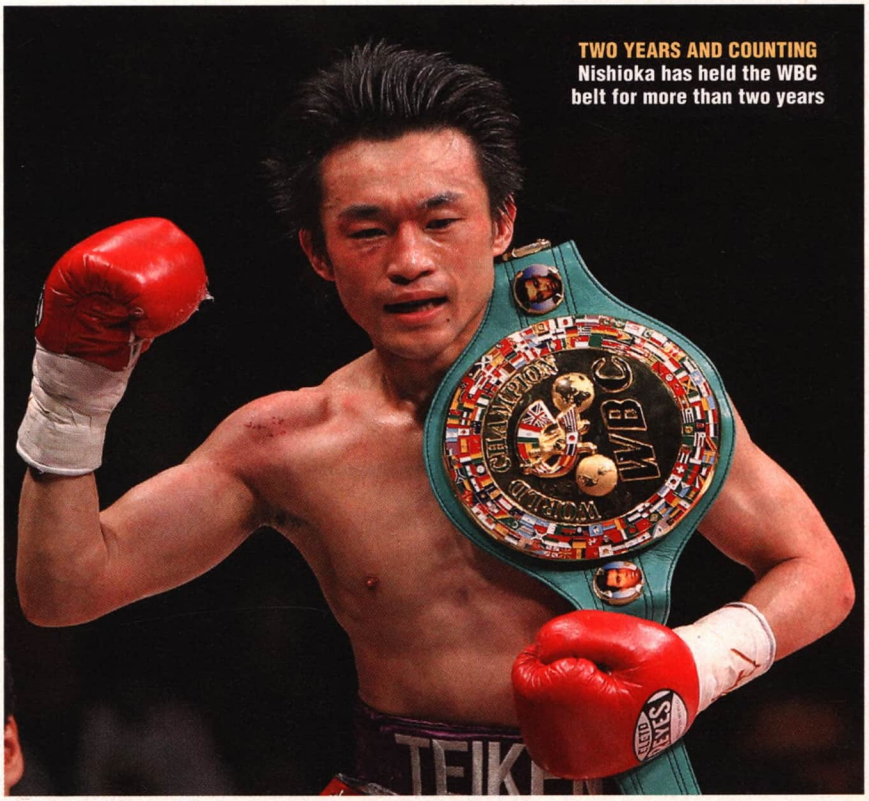
Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.

One more fighter worth mentioning: **Takalani Ndlovu**, yet another titlist. Give the 33-year-old South African credit, he'd racked up five losses, including two to Steve Molitor, but he kept on trying and upset Molitor in their third fight to snag an alphabet trinket.

**Think About It:** While the top of the division is crowded with Japanese boxers, there are also some lurking in the middle of the division. One of the more interesting resumes among them belongs to **Masaaki Serie**. You could put an "s" on the end of Serie's last name because he definitely believes in doing things more than just once. His career began with five consecutive wins, making him look like a promising prospect. Then he quickly lost his next four straight, making him look like he was well on his way to journeyman status. But then he regained his footing and has since won 13 straight. Serie is obviously a streaky fighter. So here's our recommendation to opponents under consideration for a bout against Serie: Decline the fight until Serie loses again, then try to be first in line to face him after that.

## WHAT'S IN, WHAT'S OUT

| IN | OUT |
|---|---|
| The Bruce Lee hairstyle | The Andy Lee hairstyle |
| Roy Jones praising God | Roy Jones praising Roy Jones |
| "Bam Bam" | "Chop Chop" |
| Red-haired Mexicans | Red-haired Nicaraguans |
| Floyd betting on sports | Floyd participating in sports |
| Hernan "Tyson" Marquez | Joan "Li'l Tyson" Guzman |
| The fighting Garcias | The fighting McGirts |
| The Klitschkos on HBO | The Klitschkos on ESPN3.com |
| Tim Bradley's chrome dome | The Pontiac Silverdome |
| "What are you looking at?" | "You got any excuses tonight?" |




**TWO YEARS AND COUNTING**
Nishioka has held the WBC belt for more than two years

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMOSHIDA/GETTY IMAGES

## JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Toshiaki Nishioka

**BEST BOXER**
Guillermo Rigondeaux

**MOST PROTECTED**
Jenifel Vicente

**MOST AVOIDED**
Gerry Penalosa

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Veerapol Sahaprom

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Toshiaki Nishioka-Akifumi Shimoda

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Ryol Li Lee

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Jorge Diaz

**ON THE WAY UP**
Teon Kennedy

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Steve Molitor

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Ryol Li Lee W 12
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym

# BANTAMWEIGHT

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Nonito Donaire

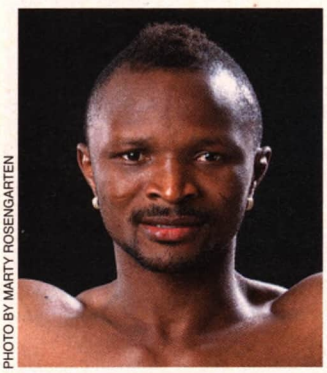


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Joseph Agbeko

We watch boxing because we seek entertainment. We also watch boxing because we seek clarity, information, and answers as to who's the best. On both fronts, the 118-pound class has delivered big-time in the past year.

A year ago, we were awaiting the result of the **Fernando Montiel**-Hozumi Hasegawa fight for the number-one spot in the division. Montiel won on a shocking fourth-round stoppage. But the fun was just beginning. Unbeatens **Yonnhy Perez** and **Abner Mares** battled fiercely to a 12-round draw. Mares, Perez, **Vic Darchinyan**, and **Joseph Agbeko** all agreed to take part in a single-elimination tournament televised by Showtime. Mares edged Darchinyan and Agbeko upset previous conqueror Perez in a pair of first-rate fights. Around the same time, **Nonito Donaire** invaded the bantamweight division with a wipeout of well-regarded **Wladimir Sidorenko**. Then Donaire rocked the boxing world almost as hard as he rocked his opponent when he scored a stunning second-round kayo of Montiel. And soon after, Darchinyan reasserted himself with an emphatic win over Perez.

Great fights, great knockouts, and lots of clarity—that's what this division has provided in the past year. There are just two major steps remaining: for Mares and Agbeko to complete the Showtime tourney and for Donaire to fight the winner (though promotional "complications" could prevent that).

Of course, there is one more guy in the mix who'd have a little something to say about a universally accepted champion being crowned without his involvement, and that's Panama's **Anselmo Moreno**. Moreno is currently ranked number two by THE RING, but it's reasonable to guess that the Showtime tourney winner will leapfrog him. In any case, perhaps we'll get a Donaire-Moreno fight in the interim and end up with so much clarity we won't know what to do with it.

There are only a handful of other fighters in the division worth talking about. **Eric Morel** is a veteran with a little bit of upside remaining. Though at age 35, the 1996 Olympian is probably out of his depth against the top bantams. Former flyweight titlist **Koki Kameda** is one of the biggest stars in the Japanese sports world and has looked good so far at 118 pounds. And interestingly, another Kameda brother, **Tomoki**, is campaigning in the weight class as well.

By the way, despite what happened against Donaire, we're not totally writing off Montiel just yet. We even listed him as "Deserves A Title Shot" in the sidebar because (a) it was Donaire, one of the best fighters alive, who iced him, and (b) Montiel showed ludicrous amounts of heart getting up from the initial knockdown.

**Think About It:** When you get down to the weight classes below lightweight, generally you find very few American fighters in the rankings. So it definitely qualifies as a noteworthy development that five of the top eight bantamweights in THE RING rankings are US-based. Donaire, Agbeko, Mares, Perez, and Morel all reside in the States (King Kong in the Bronx, Morel in Wisconsin, the others in California). However, not a single one of them was American-born. Donaire is from the Philippines, Agbeko is from Ghana, Mares is from Mexico, Perez is Colombian, and Morel was born in Puerto Rico.

## BANTAMWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Nonito Donaire

**BEST BOXER**
Nonito Donaire

**MOST PROTECTED**
A.J. Banal

**MOST AVOIDED**
Anselmo Moreno

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Martin Castillo

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Nonito Donaire
-Abner Mares

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Fernando Montiel

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Nonito Donaire

**ON THE WAY UP**
Tomoki Kameda

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Wladimir Sidorenko

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Abner Mares W 12
Vic Darchinyan

**THE "RAGING BULL" IS BACK**
**Darchinyan dominates Perez for technical decision**

# JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

A year ago, this division contained two star fighters. That's exactly two more than it contains now. With both Nonito Donaire and Vic Darchinyan having declared themselves full-time bantamweights, junior bantam is left behind as one of boxing's least interesting divisions, a weight class boasting its fair share of decent fighters but nobody capable of getting the pulse racing.

The man at the top for now is former RING 108-pound champ **Hugo Cazares**, who kept a busy four-fight schedule in 2010, defeating **Nobuo Nashiro** in an excellent fight to annex a belt, then making three defenses against ordinary opposition. Directly below Cazares in the RING rankings is fellow Mexican **Tomas Rojas**, who is not quite a former RING champion. Rojas is a 30-year-old, 12-loss journeyman for whom things are finally clicking with back-to-back wins over **Kohei Kono** and Nashiro. Cazares-Rojas wouldn't exactly be a superfight, but it would crown a RING king (the first ever at 115 pounds) and you'd have to figure it would do decent business in Me-hee-co.

There are three veterans in the rankings worth commenting on, starting with Nashiro, who remains a player despite a 1-2-1 record in his last four fights. **Omar Narvaez** is duplicating his flyweight success, winning three alphabet title fights at 115, including an impressive decision in April over previously unbeaten **Cesar Seda**. And **Cristian Mijares** is an interesting wild card, a guy who went from the pound-for-pound list to three consecutive defeats and now has a belt again and has won five in a row.

Then there are the prospects: **Yota Sato** of Japan recently hit the scene with a nice win over Kono; **Drian Francisco** is an unbeaten Filipino fighter who was protected for a while but broke out in the last year-and-a-half with three meaningful knockout victories; and Puerto Rico's Seda presumably has a future after dropping a competitive decision in Argentina to Narvaez.

We'd tell you more, but there just isn't much else in this weight class worth writing about. Junior bantam has never been a glamorous division, and it's especially un-glamorous now. If the powers-that-be ever decided to reduce to 16 weight classes, this would probably be a fine spot for the first cut.

**Think About It:** It was Tom Petty who once told us, "Even the losers get lucky sometimes." But he wasn't singing about Colombian junior bantam **Ramiro Carvajal**, whose record currently stands at 0-15 with 13 knockout losses. Carvajal turned pro all the way back in 1989, lost seven fights before quitting the game in 1993, then returned after a seven-year absence and dropped seven more fights between 2000 and 2003. Again, he disappeared for seven years before returning last December to lose to **Luis Zambrano** by first-round knockout. Feels like there should be six more where that came from, then we'll see Carvajal again in 2021 or so.

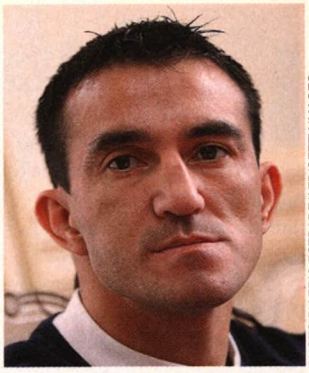


PHOTO BY ERIC ESTRADE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**Omar Narvaez**

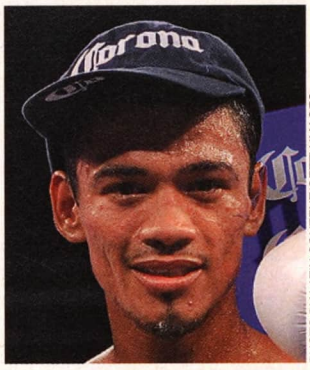


PHOTO BY LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

**Tomas Rojas**

**BLOCKBUSTER**
**Cazares drills Hiryuki Hisatake with a right hand**

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Hugo Cazares

**BEST BOXER**
Omar Narvaez

**MOST PROTECTED**
Takuya Kogawa

**MOST AVOIDED**
Juan Alberto Rosas

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Jose "Carita" Lopez

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Hugo Cazares-Tomas Rojas

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Drian Francisco

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Hugo Cazares

**ON THE WAY UP**
Leo Santa Cruz

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Simphiwe Nongqayi

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Hugo Cazares
W 12 Nobuo Nashiro

# FLYWEIGHT

It's rare that a flyweight cracks the pound-for-pound list—Nonito Donaire did it a few years ago and Mark Johnson did it back in the late '90s. But that's about it since people really started making a big deal out of P-4-P rankings—and it's especially rare that a flyweight moves toward the upper half of the list. But there's **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**, sitting at number six in THE RING's ratings.

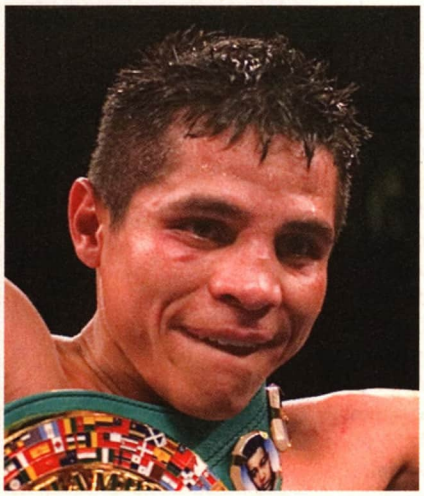


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**Edgar Sosa**

## FLYWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Hernan Marquez

**BEST BOXER**
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam

**MOST PROTECTED**
Juan Carlos Reveco

**MOST AVOIDED**
Edgar Sosa

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Rafael Lozano

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Hernan Marquez-Luis Concepcion II

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Daisuke Naito

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Luis Concepcion

**ON THE WAY UP**
Milan Melindo

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Carlos Tamara

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
W 12 Koki Kameda

It's a ranking that has stirred up some debate. Most outlets don't have him that high, and really, decent cases can be made on both sides. On the one hand, his longevity is amazing. His win-loss record at the top level over *10 years*—yes, he first won a flyweight belt on March 2, 2001—is remarkable. Plus he did score a marvelous win over the nine-years-younger Koki Kameda last year to claim THE RING throne. On the other hand, he looked lousy against little-known **Suriyan Por Chokchai** in his first defense, he's 33 and arguably was better eight years ago, and he doesn't have any fellow pound-for-pounders on his resume. It's an interesting debate. But of one thing there is no debate: The Thai veteran is this division's one true champion, and anyone else with a belt is just a contender.

The contenders who have us most riveted right now are **Hernan "Tyson" Marquez** and **Luis Concepcion**, who created pandemonium in Panama in April with a four-knockdown war that Marquez won on cuts in the 10th. There's a lot of 2011 left, but this has to be the Fight of the Year so far. However, Marquez is the guy Donaire toyed with not long ago, fighting him out of the opposite stance for four rounds because he felt comfortable experimenting and then knocking him out easily once he got serious. So that gives you a sense of what level the thrilling Marquez and Concepcion are on.

The rest of the weight class is mostly filled with veteran names who can fight but don't have fans outside their home countries very interested. **Daisuke Naito**, **Denkaosaen Kaovichit**, and **Takefumi Sakata** are all inching along in Asia. **Moruti Mthalane** matters a little in South Africa, and the same goes for **Julio Cesar Miranda** in Mexico. Former junior fly titlist **Edgar Sosa**, who lost his belt controversially in '09 and is unbeaten since, remains a tough out.

But the most interesting contender isn't really a contender yet: **Giovani Segura**. The reigning 108-pound champ appears poised to move up after consecutive kayo wins over Ivan Calderon, and who wouldn't love to see Pongsaklek-Segura in a battle of two RING champs or the wild California-based Mexican brawler against either Marquez or Concepcion? Segura could add a lot of life to this division. And if he fights Pongsaklek, the winner's right to a high pound-for-pound position becomes a lot less open to debate.

**Think About It:** If Marquez-Concepcion ends up being named THE RING's Fight of the Year, it would mark the first time a flyweight fight has won the award since … well, ever. There are a handful of other divisions that have never produced a Fight of the Year (such as cruiserweight, noted many pages ago), but fly is the only "old-school eight" division without an FOTY to its credit, a distinction it has held since '99 when Paulie Ayala-Johnny Tapia I got bantamweight off the schneid. Another thing that would be interesting about Marquez-Concepcion taking top honors: It would make it two years in a row that fighters 112 pounds or lighter won the award, since the junior fly championship bout between Segura and Calderon was the 2010 Fight of the Year.

PHOTO TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**ONE MORE TIME?**
**Wonjongkam and Naito are 2-1-1 in four bouts**

# JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT

Well, the junior flyweight torch has been passed. But in a bizarre twist, both the passer and the passee (or, if you prefer words that actually exist in the English language, the receiver) appear to be departing the division, one moving up, one moving down. The result will be a weight class with a decent cast of characters but no star power and nothing resembling a major fight.

For the moment, though, **Giovani Segura** is the champ, and he's everything you could want in a champ (other than the fact that he's trained by the infamous Javier Capetillo). Segura has the power and the disposition to rack up knockouts, his technique (or lack thereof) makes him always seem vulnerable, and he has a fun personality to boot. Unfortunately, he says he can't make 108 pounds anymore, which means a RING vacancy is coming.

And the prior RING champ, **Ivan Calderon**, won't be the one filling that vacancy, as "Iron Boy," coming off consecutive kayo losses to Segura after starting his career 34-0-1, intends to move back down to strawweight. How much does Calderon have left at age 36? He's obviously not the defensive marvel he once was, but, until someone other than Segura beats him, we're willing to give him the benefit of the doubt and say he's not shot and could theoretically still outbox most guys. That's why, in the accompanying sidebar, we've named Calderon the division's "Best Boxer." He might still have elite skills, and, frankly, there's nobody else at 108 who stands out in that regard.

The rest of the division is mostly filled with fighters who hold or at some time recently held an alphabet belt. **Gilberto Keb Baas** is an amazing story, having shocked **Omar Nino** last year to win a trinket despite having 20 losses on his record. (Keb Baas had a dangerous defense against **Adrian Hernandez** scheduled as of press time, but aren't they all dangerous when you've been beaten 20 times?) Nino is still among the division's elite. **Rodel Mayol**, who held that particular alphabet strap prior to Nino, is a respected Filipino veteran. At age 40, **Luis Lazarte** is almost as stunning a journeyman-turned-titlist story as Keb Baas, though Lazarte needed some of the most controversial hometown judging seen in years to retain his belt against ex-titlist **Ulises Solis**; a rematch was set for just after our press deadline. Then there's **Brian Viloria**, who seems to lose more than he wins at the top level, but, as a contender, has outlasted all of his 2000 US Olympic teammates.

If there's anyone who seems to have the potential to emerge as a star at this weight, it's former 105-pound beltholder **Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez**, who has had three fights so far as a junior fly and looked pretty good blowing out **Francisco Rosas** (KO 2) and navigating past tough **Manuel Vargas** (W 12). Gonzalez stands out as the number-one reason it's a shame that Segura isn't sticking around.

**Think About It:** Let's have some statistical fun with the bizarre career of Keb Baas, shall we? Longest unbeaten streak: eight fights (current). Longest winless streak: seven fights (immediately prior to the eight-fight unbeaten streak). Number of different winless streaks of three or more: three. Beltholders who've beaten him: five. Time elapsed between first unsuccessful title challenge and eventual title win: nine years, 11 months. Enough numbers. How about some names? Keb Baas has fought an absolute who's who of boxing's little guys for the last decade and a half, including **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**, **Eric Morel**, Viloria, **Edgar Sosa**, Nino, **Melchor Cob Castro**, **Luis Maldonado**, **Eric Ortiz**, and **Jose Antonio Aguirre**. Where would boxing be without guys like Keb Baas, who'll fight anyone, lose 20 times, and never give up on themselves?

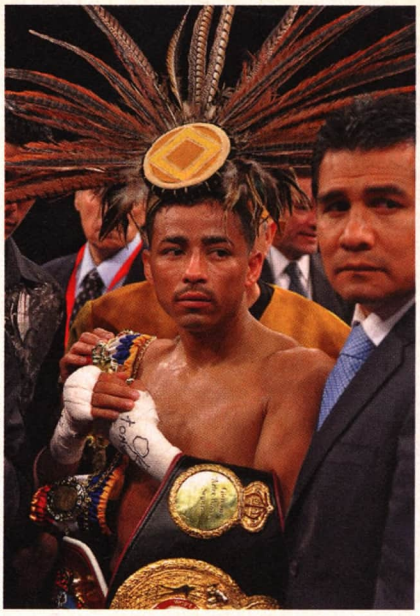


PHOTO BY GERMAN VILLASENOR

**"EL GUERREO AZTECA"**
**Segura following second kayo of Calderon**

## JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Giovani Segura

**BEST BOXER**
Ivan Calderon

**MOST PROTECTED**
Kompayak Porpramook

**MOST AVOIDED**
Ramon Garcia Hirales

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Luis Lazarte

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Giovani Segura-Roman Gonzalez

**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Gilberto Keb Baas

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Giovani Segura

**ON THE WAY UP**
Jose Rodriguez

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Ronald Barrera

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Giovani Segura KO 8 Ivan Calderon

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**"CHOCOLATITO" WINS**
Gonzalez celebrates kayo of Francisco Rosas

# STRAWWEIGHT

It's a different world thanks to YouTube, as we can now watch just about any fighter of any size from any part of the globe whenever we want. But just because we *can*, that doesn't mean we *do*. Most people—even hardcore fight fans—just don't care about the strawweights and haven't since Ricardo Lopez vacated his titles. And some highly, highly unscientific research on YouTube supports this.

We looked up a couple of major fights involving non-strawweight star fighters. A video of the Nonito Donaire-Fernando Montiel fight had accumulated 95,434 hits as of our early April check. The Manny Pacquiao-Ricky Hatton knockout had been viewed 978,895 times. Obviously, we weren't expecting the strawweights to compare. But the gap was truly astounding. **Nkosinathi Joyi's** alphabet title win over **Florante Condes** had been viewed 2,668 times. And the recent **Kazuto Ioka-Oleydong Sithsamerchai** fight had registered only 209 views. A man wins a title in his seventh pro fight, and barely 200 people care enough to watch it? The 105-pounders just can't get no respect.

There's been a fair amount of turnover in this division since last year between Oleydong being dethroned and Roman Gonzalez vacating his belt and moving up in weight. But the guy who keeps rolling along is Joyi—in large part because the South African only fights about once every eight or nine months. And his latest outing, against **Katsunari Takayama**, ended in a three-round no-contest.

At age 22, Japan's Ioka might have greater potential to be The Man in this division, as he scored a stunning fifth-round kayo of the previously unbeaten veteran Oleydong in February. To be fair, though, the 35-year-old Thai had been slipping already, surviving his previous three title defenses by two razor-thin decision wins and a majority draw.

Joyi and Ioka appear to be the class of the division, but there are plenty of veterans just a half-tier below, including **Raul "Rayito" Garcia**, **Donnie Nietes**, and **Florante "Little Pacquiao" Condes**. And there are also a few guys with mediocre-looking records who are on nice runs, such as **Michael Landero** (six straight wins after an 8-4-4 start), Takayama (four losses, but three came against titlists over the 12-round distance), and **Denver Cuello** (started with four draws and two losses in his first nine fights but has lost just one of his last 22).

And here's a wild card for you: **Ivan Calderon** says he's coming back to 105 pounds. Can he recapture past glory at a lower weight and against fighters not named Giovani Segura or is he just too old? Should be interesting to find out.

**Think About It:** Ioka won an alphabet belt in only his seventh pro fight! That makes him the fastest to win one since … **Guillermo Rigondeaux** in *his* seventh pro fight three months earlier. That's kind of crazy, two fighters winning belts in their seventh fights three months apart, but, then again, Rigondeaux's was just a silly interim title. With multiple versions of every belt floating around out there, it's inevitable that we start seeing more and more of these statistical oddities. Just to be clear, though, neither man holds the record for fewest fights en route to winning a title; that mark belongs to **Saensak Muangsurin**, who won a belt in just his third pro outing (and was a two-time titlist by his seventh).

## STRAWWEIGHT

**BEST PUNCHER**
Kazuto Ioka

**BEST BOXER**
Nkosinathi Joyi

**MOST PROTECTED**
Rommel Asenjo

**MOST AVOIDED**
Denver Cuello

**IS HE STILL AROUND?**
Rafael Orozco

**MATCHMAKER'S DREAM**
Nkosinathi Joyi
-Kazuto Ioka

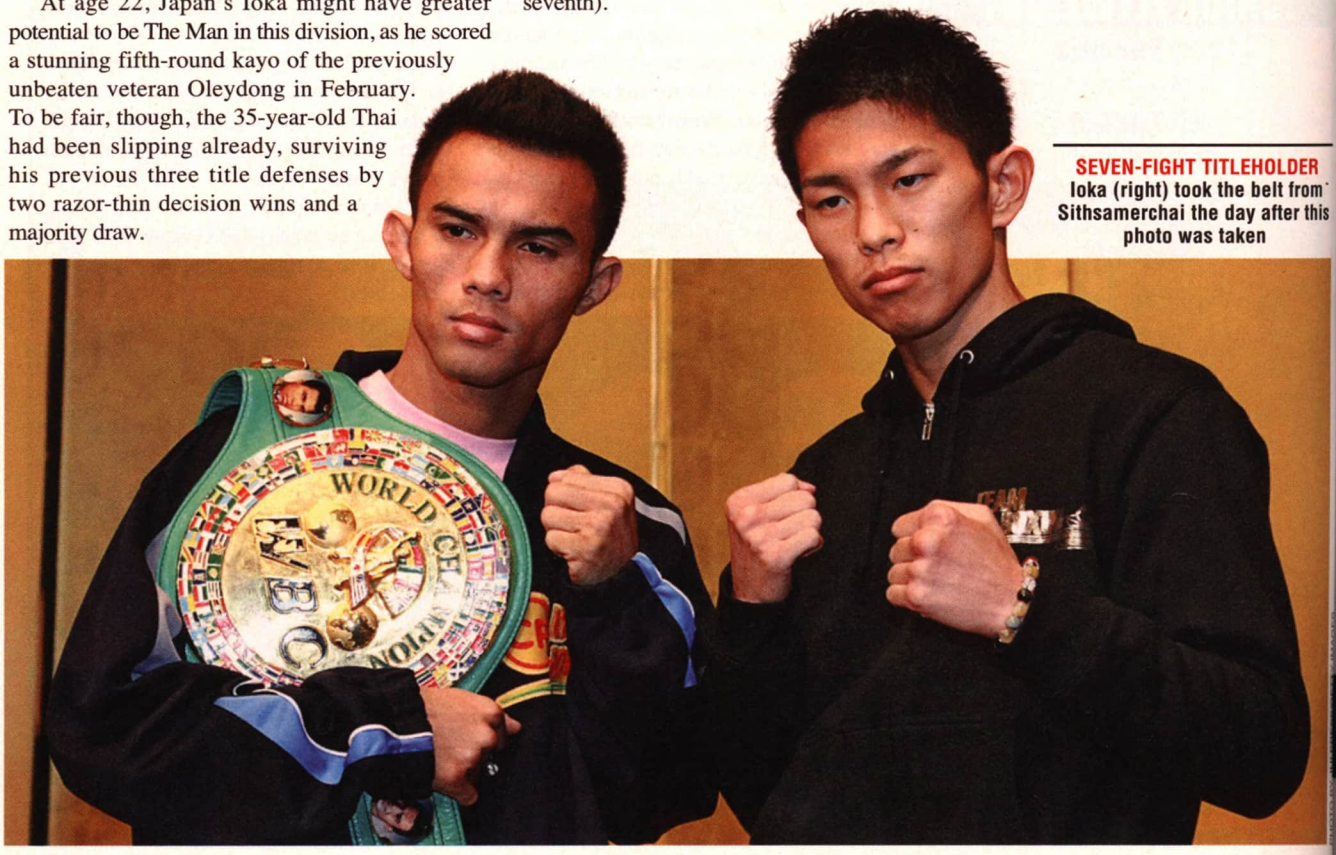
**DESERVES A TITLE SHOT**
Katsunari Takayama

**MOST FUN TO WATCH**
Florante Condes

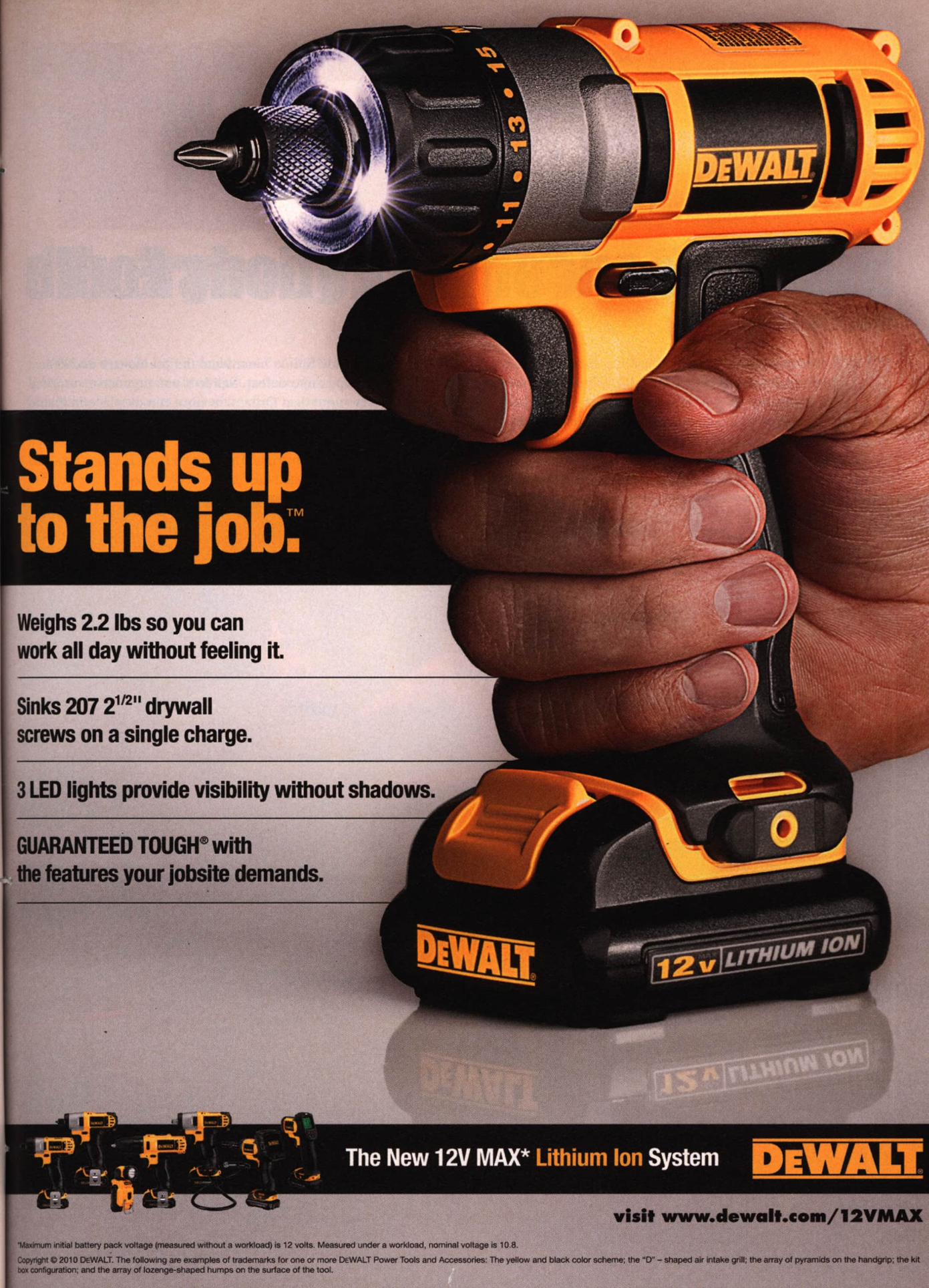
**ON THE WAY UP**
Michael Landero

**ON THE WAY DOWN**
Oleydong Sithsamerchai

**BEST FIGHT IN 2010**
Oleydong Sithsamerchai
W 12 Yasutaka Kuroki



**SEVEN-FIGHT TITLEHOLDER**
**Ioka (right) took the belt from Sithsamerchai the day after this photo was taken**

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# NIGHT OF

## How Preconceived Notions Foole

**By Don Stradley**

Moments after Victor Ortiz' thrilling unanimous decision win over Andre Berto at The MGM Grand at Foxwoods, a lightning storm erupted over the mountains of Mashantucket, Connecticut. It was as if the gods themselves had been appeased.

The gods would have to be happy, especially if they were the gods of boxing upsets, for approximately 2,200 miles away the unheralded Orlando Salido hammered the previously undefeated Juan Manuel Lopez into defeat. Salido's win may have surprised onlookers even more than Ortiz' win since it took place in Puerto Rico, where Lopez was on the verge of becoming the island nation's favorite fighter.

Upsets are good for boxing. They create a buzz. But upsets also make a lot of people scratch their heads in confusion.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**UPSET NUMBER ONE**
**Ortiz hammers Berto to the ground en route to a surprise 12-round decision that redeemed the Californian's reputation and reestablished him as a hot young fighter.**

# THE DOG!

## d Everybody Except The Winners

"We all thought Berto would win," said HBO analyst Emanuel Steward, referring to his broadcast partners Jim Lampley and Larry Merchant. "Berto was used to fighting bigger guys, and this was Ortiz' first time as a welterweight. Plus, Ortiz wasn't particularly well-known on the East Coast, so he was coming into unusual territory for him. But it doesn't matter what you know or what you say because, in boxing, everything can flip-flop."

Steward wrestled with hindsight while discussing Ortiz' win with THE RING. He recalled something light heavyweight Chad Dawson told him just days before the bout.

"Chad told me, 'Berto doesn't like left-handers. Ortiz has a chance.' I thought back to when Berto lost to Jesus Gonzalez in the amateurs. I asked Berto how he felt about left-handers. He said he had no problem with them. But I kept thinking about Chad's

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

**UPSET NUMBER TWO**
**Veteran contender Salido celebrates his shocking TKO of previously undefeated Juan Manuel Marquez. The fact that the Mexican accomplished the feat in Lopez' homeland of Puerto Rico was especially impressive.**

comment. Jesus Gonzalez is like Ortiz, a short Mexican who is fast and pulls the trigger quick.

"I won't say I thought Ortiz would win. I'm not one of those guys who'll change my thoughts after the fight is over to sound like I know a lot. We had no idea Ortiz was on a mission. I won't say he was like Buster Douglas fighting Mike Tyson, but there was that kind of intensity and excitement about him. Berto looked uncomfortable, even before the bell, like something about his surroundings was bothering him. I also think Berto overlooked Ortiz." Steward said.

To his credit, Berto didn't make any excuses. He said only that he hadn't felt like himself and couldn't get his punches off.

The Ortiz we saw at Foxwoods wasn't the grinning heir apparent to Oscar De La Hoya that we've come to know. Instead, in the days prior to the bout, he'd been an angry little trash talker. He'd been stamped as a quitter, a fizzler, and he was tired of it. The negative press had lit a fire under him.

Ortiz, 146, Oxnard, California, entered the ring wearing a scruffy beard and his hair brushed up into a ratty Mohawk. His eyes were dark and mean. There were no smiles. As Ortiz stood in his corner, his chest puffed up, he looked like a fighting rooster ready to enter the pit. He lived up to his new rough image, nearly kayoing Berto in the first round, dropping him twice (one knockdown was deemed a slip by referee Mike Ortega) and knocking Berto all around the ring. He was an absolute monster.

Ortiz continued his search-and-destroy tactics in round two until Berto landed a sneak counter right that put Ortiz on the canvas briefly. Undaunted, Ortiz rocketed out of his corner for rounds three, four, and five, banging away at Berto. If Berto was waiting for Ortiz to fade, he was doing it the hard way.

The sixth saw Berto, 145½, Winter Haven, Florida, come out with a sense of purpose. Ortiz found himself on the canvas again, compliments of another counter right, in a slightly dazed state. Ortiz struggled to his feet, survived Berto's desperation follow-up, and, near the round's end, Ortiz shocked the crowd of 2,491 by knocking Berto down.

The second half of the fight saw the inevitable tiring of both fighters, and the action grew sloppy. They both slipped to the canvas in a tangle during the seventh, and Ortiz had a point deducted for a rabbit punch in the 10th. Still, even as they tired, both fighters threw mean punches, their torrid exchanges bringing screams from the appreciative crowd and shouts from the more excitable types along press row.

Ortiz, 29-2-2 (22), could've ended matters in the 11th as he pinned Berto on the ropes and hammered him for nearly 30 seconds, breaking through Berto's guard with head-snapping uppercuts. Berto, glassy-eyed and exhausted, weathered the battering, but he must've known the fight had gotten away from him. The final round, which opened with the fighters hugging in a show of respect, saw Ortiz still trying to land meaningful punches while Berto was flatfooted along the ropes, hoping to land his sneaky right. Two of the three judges gave the 12th to Berto. They were being polite.

Judges Clark Sammartino, Julie Lederman, and Glenn Feldman saw the bout for Ortiz by respective scores of 115-110, 114-111, and 114-112. THE RING had Ortiz the winner, 116-110.

"We have no issues," said Berto promoter Lou DiBella, who gave Ortiz plenty of credit but described the fight as "very, very close." Actually, Ortiz' win couldn't have been any more emphatic if he'd left the ring with Berto's head on a platter.

Berto, 27-1 (21), might do better in a rematch, but Steward doesn't think so.

"Next time, Ortiz knocks him out. The only thing keeping Berto up was that he could lean on Ortiz. If Ortiz steps back, he scores a knockout," said Steward.

After the bout, Ortiz mugged for photographers and clowned around with his new WBC belt. He could finally smile.

At the Ruben Rodriguez Coliseum in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, Salido was smiling too. He'd absorbed Lopez' best shots and kept winging right hands, most of them landing flush. In the fifth, Salido landed a brutal right to the jaw that put Lopez on his backside. The WBO featherweight

**ORTIZ FLOORED**
**Referee Mike Ortega guides Berto to a neutral corner after he decked Ortiz with a right hand in the amazing sixth round that saw both men on the canvas.**

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**VICIOUS VICTOR**
After being dropped in the sixth, Ortiz beat the count and roared back to floor Berto. It was a sensational round that will have to be given serious consideration for Round of the Year.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

**REDEMPTION**
Ortiz is riding high again following his sizzling victory over Berto. For the time being, at least, he has erased the stigma of his surrender to Marcos Maidana.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

titlist was never the same after that, even as 10,115 fans roared to keep their idol fighting. If there was anything positive to glean from this, it was that, even on this disastrous night, Lopez was gutsy. Lopez will always be gutsy.

The main problem seemed to be that Lopez, 125, Caguas, Puerto Rico, has been so successful as a knockout artist that he has gotten away from boxing. When Salido, 126, Sonora, Mexico, showed he could withstand Lopez' bombs, Lopez was unable to dig his old boxing skills out of cold storage. Salido kept crashing right hands to Lopez' head and chin until referee Robert Ramirez Jr. stopped the bout at 1:30 of round eight.

Lopez, 30-1 (27), on his feet at the time of the stoppage, didn't approve of Ramirez' actions, nor did many fans who threw bottles at the ring. Meanwhile, Lopez' promoter Bob Arum went into immediate spin control.

"The distractions did the job," said Arum after the bout, referring to Lopez' recent divorce. "Look at Miguel Cotto, who has never been better since he left to train outside of Puerto Rico. And he doesn't get out of shape between fights."

Arum had seen Lopez in the Philippines for a Manny Pacquiao birthday party and had guessed he was weighing up to 190 pounds.

"And I know that personal problems affected this boy. Boxing is a serious business and you have to be in great physical condition between fights. You have to have the best life between fights, and, when you have training camp for a fight, like Cotto, you should leave the island," Arum said.

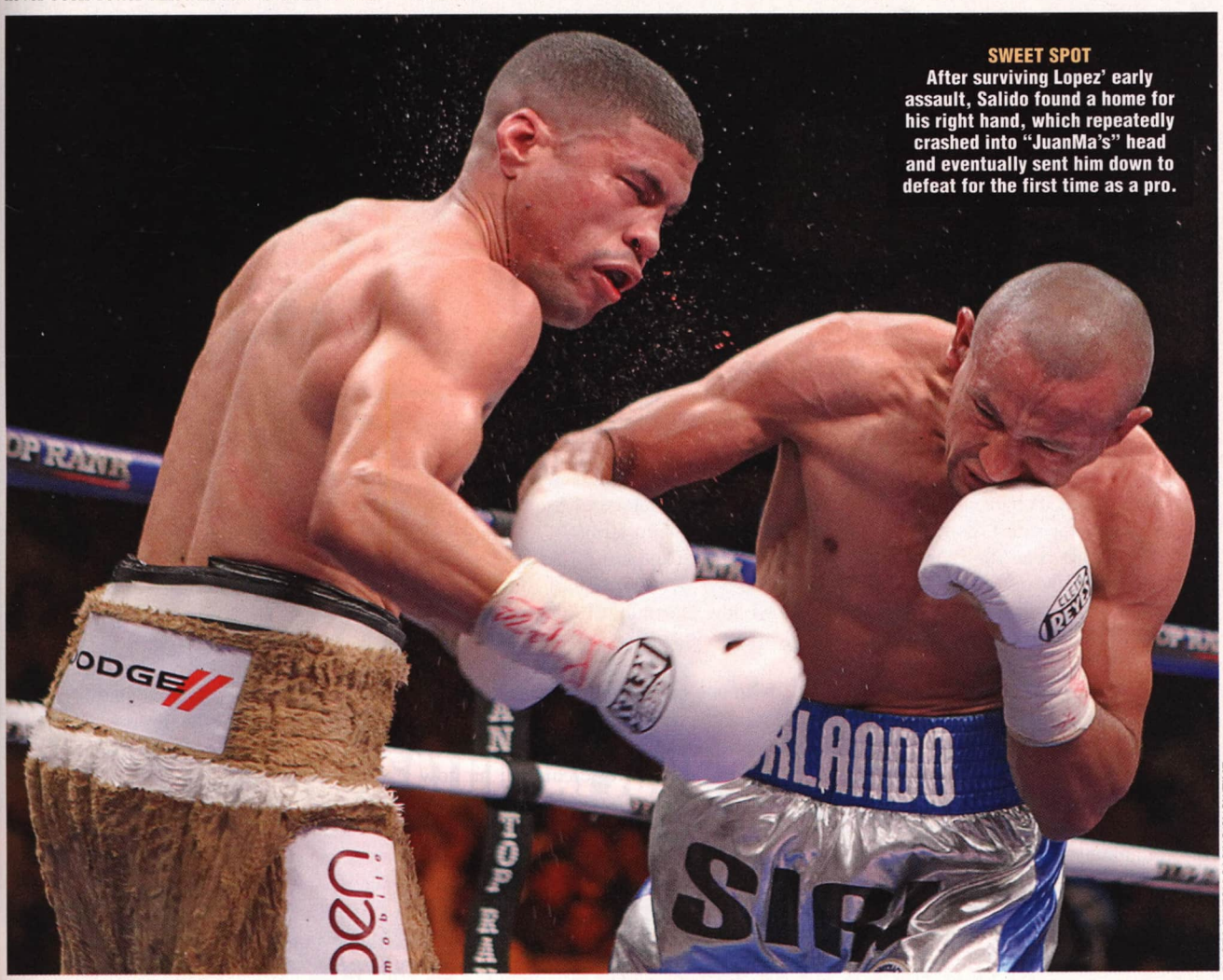
Regardless of the excuses, Berto and Lopez were supposed to walk over Ortiz and Salido on their way to bigger fights.

But wasn't there some inkling that Lopez and Berto might have been ripe for plucking? After all, Lopez has been dropped many times, and Rogers Mtawga had him nearly out on his feet a couple years ago in New York. As for Berto, he hadn't been as aetive as Ortiz, fighting only twice a year in 2009-2010, while Ortiz fought seven times in roughly the same span. Still, few gave Ortiz a chance, and even fewer supported Salido.

Salido, 35-11-2 (23), couldn't have expected to be the favorite, not with a spotty record, a failed drug test in his past, and problems making weight in his previous bout. Still, he was a durable veteran who hadn't been kayoed in more than a decade and had briefly held the IBF featherweight title. Salido wasn't exactly Ruben Olivares, but he wasn't a mere trialhorse, either.

There also were hints that Salido was well-prepared and focused. After a media day workout, Salido told the press, "I did not have a very good camp for the [Yuriorkis] Gamboa fight because I went to Mexico City to train and I just never got comfortable. This time I trained in Nogales and Ciudad Obregon and feel a lot better about my preparation. That's what I did for the Cristobal Cruz fight when I won the [IBF] title, and that's what I should have done for the Gamboa fight. My confidence is sky high for this fight. I know this could be my last chance and I want to take advantage of it."

It sounds convincing now, but none of us were thinking upset. There are three main reasons for this:




**SWEET SPOT**
**After surviving Lopez' early assault, Salido found a home for his right hand, which repeatedly crashed into "JuanMa's" head and eventually sent him down to defeat for the first time as a pro.**

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

**REBIRTH**
**Salido is rightfully joyous following the biggest victory of his career, a victory that proved that the 48-fight veteran is still capable of competing with the best 126-pounders in the world.**

**• Experts and casual fans alike go only by what they've seen.**

Boxing observers will tell you they love boxing because of its unpredictability. Yet, when giving their thoughts on a bout, they tend to go with the safest, most predictable forecast. Ortiz has been known to run out of gas, and, against Marcos Maidana, he appeared to quit. Therefore, most scenarios for his fight with Berto had him either quitting or fading. That's why he entered Foxwoods as a 4-1 underdog. Meanwhile, Lopez was known for his explosive power, and it seemed inconceivable that he would lose to Salido.

Very few people will go out on a limb and base a prediction on something that has never happened, such as Lopez experiencing a power failure or Ortiz fighting hard for 12 entire rounds.

**• Boxing is all about "What have you done for me lately?"**

Like movie stars, fighters are generally judged by their last performance. Berto's was a one-round knockout over Freddy Hernandez. Lopez' was a convincing stoppage of Rafael Marquez. Meanwhile, Ortiz' last bout saw him struggle to a majority draw, while Salido lost a 12-round decision to Gamboa. By that line of thinking, it's no wonder Berto and Lopez were heavy favorites.

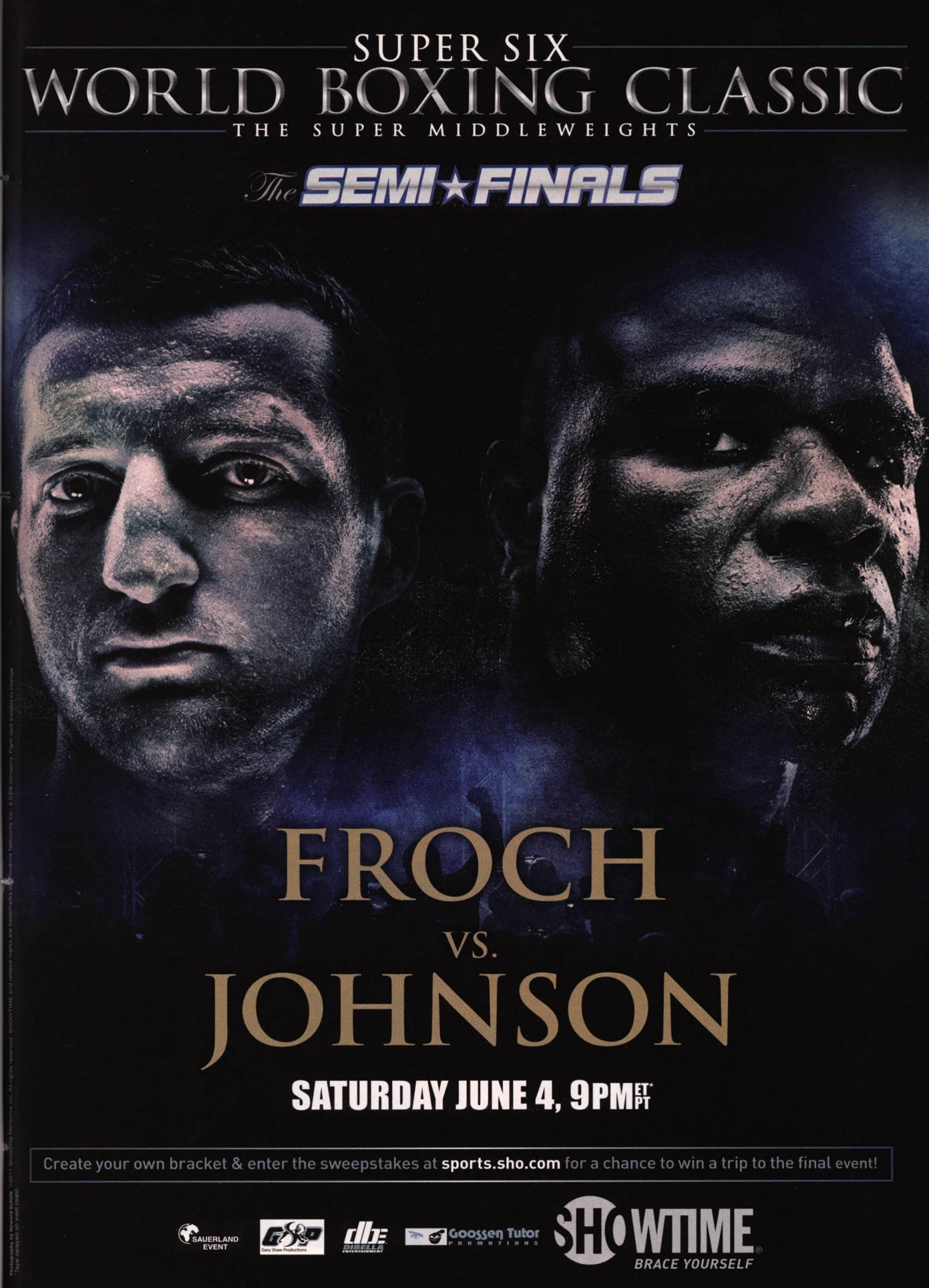
**• No one considered that Berto and Lopez might be riding too high.**

After beating Marquez last November, Lopez made it pretty clear that he now considered himself "The Man." That had been an emotional bout against an A-class fighter. Coming into his next fight, Lopez was bound to experience a serious come down. Ditto for Berto stopping Hernandez in one. Berto must've been feeling like The Hulk after that one. But great performances are often followed by lesser ones.

If most of us were caught by surprise by these two upsets, it is probably because we believed in Lopez' power as much as Lopez did, or we believed, like Berto, that Ortiz was simply not an elite fighter. We sided with the undefeated titlists. We sided with the glamour and the money. We, too, were looking ahead.

All in all, though, April 16, 2011, should be remembered as a great night for boxing. Rematches will be made, but, no matter what transpires, it won't be quite as fun as what happened on the night of the upsets when a young man proved he belonged and a forgotten ex-titlist proved he still had something to offer. ■

*Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to* THE RING.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**SIZZLING SHOCKER**
The allegedly washed-up Morales turned in a memorable performance, battling Maidana all the way in a thrilling 12-rounder that took the vast majority of fans and pundits by complete surprise.

# MORALES' MIRACLE

## Still "El Terrible" After All These Years

**By William Dettloff**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

They came to Vegas to bury Erik Morales, and maybe this time, for once, you couldn't blame them. With a few exceptions, fight writers are a skittish and alarmist bunch, and they came armed with their laptops and full bellies, wrung their hands and said we all should be worried about Morales getting his head handed to him by Marcos Maidana.

Sure, Morales had had a nice three-year vacation before his comeback. But all those hard fights over all those hard years had to have taken it all out of him, and, if you needed evidence, all you had to do was look at the fight he went out on: a loss to David Diaz, a pug as ordinary in the ring as he is entertaining outside it. Another comedian miscast as prizefighter.

Not only that, but who among us could forget the way Morales took the whole count against Manny Pacquiao in the rubber match, resting his arms on his knees, as certain as any fighter has ever been that all hope was lost? Who would have thought we'd ever see him that way, so amenable to surrender? And when he said later he was harried by headaches and ringing in his ears, you had to be happy he got out when he did and then dismissive at his decision to come back, the way we're dismissive at most decisions made by people braver than we are.

Morales, 51-7 (35), didn't beat Maidana, 30-2 (27), losing a majority decision by scores of 114-114 and 116-112 twice (THE RING had Maidana winning 115-114). But he made a great many people feel silly at having underestimated him, and, when you take stock of your life and what you've done, there are worse things than that to have on your resume.

The arguments came in the days that followed that Maidana's own liabilities, defensive and otherwise, contributed as much to Morales' success as did anything Morales was able to muster. But that's always been the case. A fighter never wins on his own, especially one whose best days were in a previous era. He always must have his opponent's cooperation, and, when he's got that, it doesn't matter how much the guys at ringside cluck and ready the obituaries.

When comebacking 42-year-old Larry Holmes took on 30-year-old, undefeated heavyweight contender Ray Mercer in 1992, Mercer was fresh off his frightening annihilation of Tommy Morrison. Holmes, on the other hand, had only gotten four years older since Mike Tyson pancaked him in 1988. The bookies made Mercer a 4-1 favorite, and, when a New York television sportscaster begged viewers to write to Holmes and tell him not to fight because "Ray Mercer will kill him," almost no one disagreed. Holmes did.

"I'm not going by what he did to Tommy Morrison," Holmes said in the days leading up to the fight. "They're making Ray Mercer a killer. I don't think he knows what I know. Ray Mercer gets hit a lot. [And] he's not big. Anyone under 6'2" who doesn't have a lot of head movement is going to get hit with a lot of jabs."

Holmes, in a kind of poor man's "Rumble In The Jungle," hit Mercer with jabs and a lot more on the way to winning a unanimous decision by scores of 117-112, 117-111, and 115-113. Borrowing from George Foreman's playbook, he said afterward, "I'm back, world. Everybody says you got to lie down and die when you're 40. I proved you don't."

Foreman, of course, wrote the book on the long and improbable successful comeback. Though we all remember now that he became the oldest heavyweight champion in history when he flattened Michael Moorer at age 45 in 1994, few have the stomach for recalling the mess that was his face after he scraped by hard-hitting but underachieving, 26-year-old Alex Stewart in 1992.

"[The fight] was barely halfway done and there was Foreman with lumps beneath both eyes and the right side of his face distended as if his jaw was broken," wrote Phil Berger in *The New York Times*. "He looked like the bad guy from a fright movie."

*Sports Illustrated*'s Pat Putnam wrote: "Stewart's slashing fists pounded the 43-year-old former heavyweight champion until he was nearly unrecognizable. When the fight was over, Foreman peered at his defeated tormentor through slits in a badly swollen and torn face. Blood leaked from a dark lump under his damaged right eye; more spilled from his mangled nose and ripped mouth."

Naturally, many begged Foreman to retire after the fight. Instead, he plodded on, beating Pierre Coetzer and losing to Tommy Morrison before finally overcoming

**BULL'S-EYE**
**It was left hooks like this one from Maidana that eventually reduced Morales' right eye to something resembling an overripe plum. But despite the handicap, the Mexican fan-favorite kept fighting right up until the final bell.**

3-1 odds to stop the undefeated Moorer in 11 rounds in Las Vegas. Retire, indeed.

Of course, Foreman had learned of the fallibility of "experts" 20 years before, when he was an undefeated behemoth and nearly all of the sport's thinking men said he was going to pound Muhammad Ali into oblivion.

Although Maidana wasn't undefeated when he opposed Morales, 34, he was (and remains) highly regarded; THE RING ranked him third in the world in the talent-packed junior welterweight division, and he lost neither fans nor respect in losing a thriller to Amir Khan (L 12) in his prior fight. Wins over Victor Ortiz (KO 6), Victor Cayo (KO 6), and DeMarcus Corley (W 12) amply demonstrated his strengths—titanium chin, unshakable resolve, heavy hands—and his weaknesses—leaky defense and occasional clumsiness. The former were on display in the first couple rounds against Morales, when Maidana, 27, scored with sweeping punches with both hands, one of which created a huge swelling around Morales' right eye in the opening round.

It wasn't until the third when Morales, Tijuana, Mexico, looking slow and teetering, began to land a few jabs, and then that old familiar right hand, straight as an arrow and as endless as the southwestern sky, came over the top once or twice. By the fourth, he was cranking up that left hook too, the same one we'd seen him throw so many times over the years against guys both better and worse than Maidana.

Maidana, Buenos Aires, Argentina, took Morales' better punches well until a left hook shook and wobbled him in the eighth. The ninth was the kind of mayhem that guys as old and worn down as Morales weren't supposed to survive, much less have the spirit to instigate. It was all Maidana early, looking for all the world like a miniature Luis Firpo, and then Morales late, looking almost but not quite 25 again, his right eye a damn good facsimile of Carmen Basilio's in his second fight against Ray Robinson.

Morales' tank went dry in the last rounds, but, by then, his point had been made and, on a much smaller scale, it felt almost the way it did when Evander Holyfield beat Mike Tyson in 1996 in their first meeting. Going in, Holyfield was a 12-1 underdog (up from 18-1) and for good reason. In his previous fight, he struggled with and looked awful stopping former cruiserweight beltholder Bobby Czyz. Tyson, on the other hand, was at his most malevolent, having just stopped Bruce Seldon in the first round with a right hand that barely grazed the top of Seldon's head.

"Everyone was sure he was going to lose to Mike Tyson, probably by knockout, and possibly in a manner that would jeopardize his health," Steve Farhood wrote in THE RING. That was putting it mildly. In a newspaper poll of 48 fight writers, only one, *The Boston Globe*'s Ron Borges, picked Holyfield to win. Most industry lifers saw an easy win for Tyson.

Legendary manager Mickey Duff told *Boxing News*, "It's an easy fight for Tyson and will last a maximum of four rounds, probably less. There's no contest. It's a complete and total mismatch."

British trainer Brendan Ingle said, "Tyson will destroy him. He'll bash Holyfield up in about two rounds. It won't go past three. There's no way Holyfield can win, not a cat in hell's chance. I just can't see it. Holyfield is made for Tyson."

We all know what happened: Holyfield stopped Tyson in 11 rounds and, in the rematch, convinced Tyson to get disqualified lest he take another prolonged beating. This is the guy everyone was so worried about?

It remains to be seen whether Morales' heroics were the product of what the legendary matchmaker Teddy Brenner called the last great night every great fighter has in him or something more durable. Morales is already calling out Juan Manuel Marquez and others, but, if he decides to go out on a positive note, it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. Nor would he be the first guy to do it that way.

Michael Carbajal had built and enjoyed a successful career in boxing by anyone's standards: several reigns as a light flyweight titleholder, participant in one of the great lighter-weight trilogies ever with Humberto

**TIT FOR TAT**
Both Morales (top) and Maidana (bottom) took turns giving and receiving in a compelling struggle, which turned out to be an early candidate for 2011's Fight of the Year.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**STILL POTENT**
Morales' mid-fight rally was truly inspirational, especially coming from a faded warrior who many people feared would be seriously hurt by the murderous-punching Maidana.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/LIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**ROARING DOWN THE STRETCH**
When weary Morales slowed in the final two rounds, the younger Maidana continued to dish out punishment. Although it was a very close fight, it was in the final stages that Maidana edged ahead on the scorecards.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

**BADGE OF HONOR**

**Although Morales' right eye was completely closed by the end of the fight, new opportunities opened up for him, thanks to his valiant stand. Where he goes from here remains to be seen, but, even if he never fights again, the Maidana fight enhanced his legacy.**

Gonzalez, the first light flyweight to earn a million dollar purse, etc. You couldn't blame him when he walked away in 1997 after Baby Jake Matlala stopped him on cuts in Las Vegas. He'd done everything he wanted to do. But he couldn't take having gone out like that. It didn't sit right. So he started a comeback. Just like a thousand other guys. Just like Morales.

Carbajal, at 32, beat three lower-level guys (just like Morales did) and then got a shot at highly ranked, 20-year-old Jorge Arce in Tijuana (on the undercard of Morales' title defense against Reynante Jamili, incidentally). Arce led on all cards and was doing a job on Carbajal when "Manitas De Piedra (Little Hands of Stone)" landed a right hand that ended it in the 11th round and won him THE RING's Comeback of the Year Award.

"I knew it was my last fight and that I would retire on top," Carbajal said later. And he did.

At the other end of the scale is Daniel Zaragoza, who in the final fight of his long career relinquished the WBC super bantamweight title to Morales in El Paso, Texas, in 1997. Zaragoza was thought by most to be done when, over three fights in 1992 and '93, he lost the WBC junior featherweight title to Thierry Jacob, drew with Tracy Harris Patterson, and then was stopped on cuts by Patterson in seven rounds in their rematch. He was already 36 years old, ancient for a 122-pound fighter, and, without a big punch or skin that could withstand a stiff breeze without cracking open, there seemed little reason for him to continue.

But three months after losing to Patterson, there was "The Mouse," back at it again in that spasmodic style, outhustling and outfighting guys he had no good reason to beat, and, in 1995, he reclaimed the title he'd lost to Patterson. Four more title defenses followed, the most important a victory over Wayne McCullough, and, by the time he was done, Zaragoza had built himself a Hall of Fame career. If Zaragoza could go that long at a very high level, why not Morales too?

Of course, sometimes we are right to be worried. Muhammad Ali should have never fought Larry Holmes. Joe Louis shouldn't have gone anywhere near Rocky Marciano. And Benny Leonard did himself no favors against Jimmy McLarnin. But Morales did himself proud against a good, young, strong fighter and, if he never wins another fight, he'll have that one to look back on. ■

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**CROWNING CUP**
Rocky Fielding has a bit of fun with the lid of the Prizefighter cup he's just won by beating Tobias Webb to capture first place in the super middleweight tournament on March 23, 2011, in Liverpool, England.

# THE PRIZEFIGHTER

## An Innovative Concept For A New Era

**By Gavin Evans**

Boxing is not exactly big on innovation. We cling to the past, forever looking over our shoulders at the wondrous ways things were done in various golden eras. And this applies particularly to the promotional sphere. If new boys on our block, such as UFC, muscle in with fresh ideas, we merely huff and puff while our sport moves ever closer to the fringes.

So when a novel scheme for pulling the punters is proposed, the reflex response tends towards skepticism. That, at least, was part of the backdrop three years ago when Barry Hearn's Matchroom Sport came up with the idea of one-night knockout events featuring eight boxers fighting three-round bouts for what was then a £25,000 (approximately $41,000) first prize.

"We recognized audience demands were changing," said Matchroom's managing director Eddie Hearn, "but boxing wasn't changing with them. It had become flat. You have a long wait for the main event with an undercard that is often too one-sided, and then the big fight might only last a few minutes. We needed more excitement, more build-up of the characters involved, and a new way of doing things. So we came up with a model where the boxers could double their money with each win."

The proposal in early 2008 was that each Prizefighter event would involve promising young prospects from a chosen weight division. Four of the boxers would be eliminated in the quarter finals, taking home a consolation prize, now set at £4,000 ($6,500), two more in the semifinals at £8,000 ($13,000), and the winning finalist would walk away with the prize money of what is now £32,000 ($52,500) with £16,000 ($26,000) for the runner-up. The whole event would be over in three hours.

The concept was presented to the British Boxing Board of Control, which was not exactly bowled over at first. "It is true to say they were a little hesitant although they did understand the need to do something different to promote boxing," said Eddie Hearn. The team then sat down with the board's general secretary, Robert Smith, and the board's doctors and eventually won them over to trying the idea. "They thought about it carefully, agreed to give it a try, and now they love it," he said.

Barry Hearn threw his East End charm and well-honed PR skills into this venture, announcing: "This is an experiment, but we should try it rather than letting things disintegrate. I've done over 500 boxing shows, and today isn't as exciting as former days. That's my fault and that of promoters who have bigger fighters than me. But this is a new adventure that will revolutionize the sport. I've looked at the popularity of Ultimate Fighting Championship—and people like the instant action of it. We are trying to combine *The Contender* and UFC television series into something for professional boxing."

The maiden event, televised live by Sky television and held at the atmospheric cauldron of York Hall in London's East End, was a romping success. It heralded the brief rise of the Irishman Martin Rogan, who pulled off a minor surprise by outpunching the unbeaten former amateur star David Dolan.

"I knew the tournament was going to be the defining point and that I had to win it," said Rogan, who used his victory to secure a fight with Audley Harrison, whom he outpointed, and to lift the Commonwealth title by stopping Matt Skelton – setting a precedent that several future winners followed.

The verdict from the fans and from the ringside press was that it was a remarkable success. The three-round limit meant that the boxers had no option but to go all out, which made for thrilling bouts. The knockout format gave it added impetus, and quick succession of bouts ensured there was no lull in the action.

Still, there were pockets of negativity from a few die-hard boxing fans and some established players, but this never bothered Matchroom. "It's a bit like the situation with the introduction of 20-20 cricket," Eddie Hearn said, referring to the shortest form of Britain's leading summer sport. "You'll always have cricket people saying that the real thing is the five-day test match, and it's the same with Prizefighter. The hardcore boxing fan is not necessarily a huge fan of the concept, and that's fine. We are getting plenty of non-boxing people coming to our events. It's opening the sport to a new audience, and it's ideal for our corporate customers."

For Matchroom, this promotional success heralded a resumption of a dormant affair with the fight game, which had been off the boil for the best part of a decade. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Barry Hearn was Britain's premier boxing promoter, handling the lucrative careers of several of the country's major stars, including Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn. He pioneered the shift from terrestrial television to the satellite network, Sky, and constantly tried new ideas for boosting the profiles of his stars.

But by the late 1990s, Hearn had downgraded his boxing interests while expanding his control over world snooker and darts, opening up new ground in promoting golf, poker, fishing, and tenpin bowling and also indulging his love for the football side Leyton Orient by helping to fund it (and by serving as its chairman). Only three of Matchroom's staff of 37 were involved in the fight game, steered by its head of boxing, John Wischhusen.

Prizefighter shifted the balance, putting boxing back where it belonged. And for Eddie Hearn, it meant a return to a sport he'd first encountered as a seven-year-old boy, back in 1987, when his dad promoted Frank Bruno's victory over Joe Bugner. From then on, he became engrossed and later joined a local gym. "I had three fights, won them all, and retired undefeated," he said, laughing. "I was taking a few

**MOVING ON UP**
Popular Irish heavyweight Martin Rogan used his Prizefighter victory as a springboard to a series of lucrative fights and a brief reign as Commonwealth titleholder.

too many punches in the gym, although the training was fantastic. It was a good experience."

Barry Hearn once challenged his son to a bit of sparring in the ring, convinced that the working-class old man would be able to show his middle-class lad a few things, but, by the second round, youth had been served, and Barry said he'd never been hit so hard.

Eddie completed college and a spell working in sports sponsorship and marketing before joining Matchroom eight years ago although his main focus was on the other sports in their arsenal. But having played a key role in brainstorming the Prizefighter idea, he quickly became central to the group's boxing expanding operation.

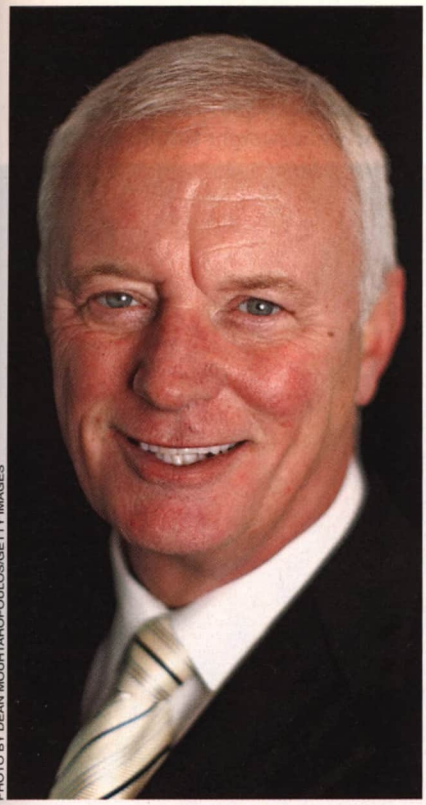

PHOTO BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

**NEW ENTHUSIASM**
**Promoter Barry Hearn, once the top promoter in the UK, has reinvigorated his involvement with boxing with the highly successful Prizefighter series.**

**REJUVENATED**
**Former WBA junior welter titleholder Gavin Rees was in a slump until he won the Prizefighter cup. In his third bout after winning the one-night tournament, he captured the British lightweight title with an 11th-round TKO of previously unbeaten John Watson.**

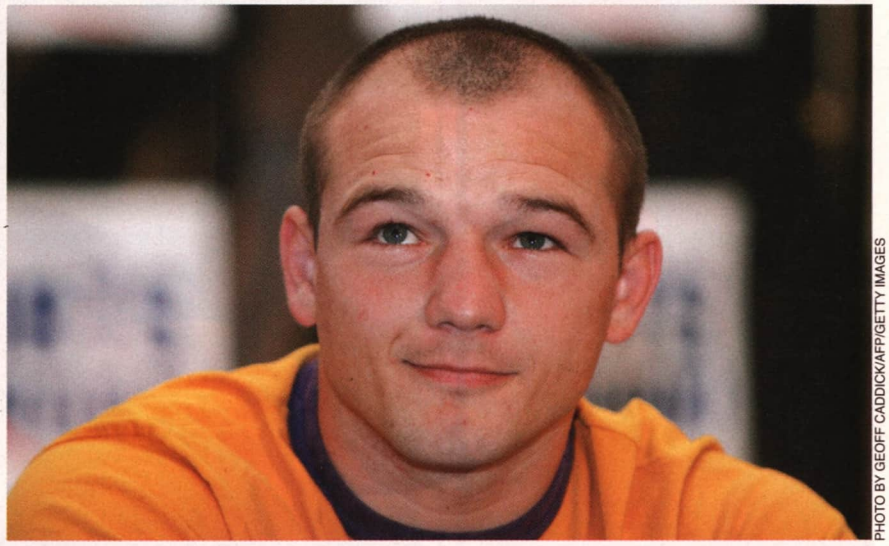

PHOTO BY GEOFF CADDICK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**KISSING THE CUP**
**Winning the Prizefighter heavyweight trophy propelled Audley Harrison all the way to a shot at WBA heavyweight boss David Haye. Harrison quickly caved against Haye but took home a handsome paycheck, which he would never have received without his Prizefighter success.**

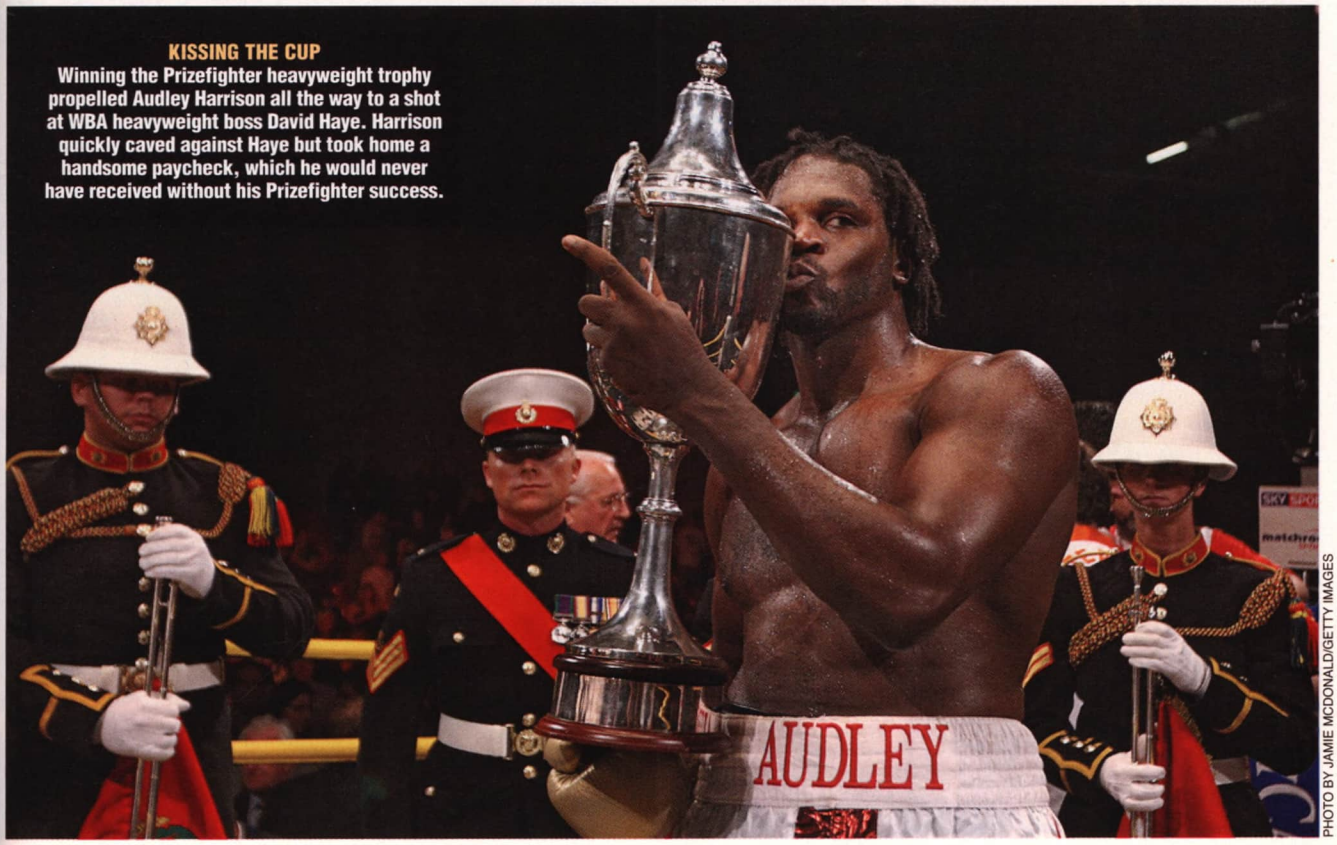


PHOTO BY JAMIE MCDONALD/GETTY IMAGES

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Prizefighter was initially restricted to prospects, but Hearn soon opened it up to established campaigners, including former stars that were attracted by the publicity generated by the event and by the prize money. Among those who signed on were Herbie Hide, Gavin Rees, Danny Williams, and Robin Reid.

Rees, 34-1 (16), a one-time WBA junior welterweight titlist, was experiencing a career slump, but, in one of the most thrilling Prizefighter events, he emerged victorious and used this platform to launch his successful bid to lift the British lightweight title.

Perhaps the greatest revival came from Audley Harrison, whose career was going nowhere when he bumped into Eddie Hearn in a casino. "Audley told me he was looking for a break—maybe a six round fight—but instead I proposed he enter our next heavyweight Prizefighter event," said Hearn. "I told him that if he won we could get him a European title shot, and, if he won, that we could get

**RAPID REMOVAL**
**Former WBA super middleweight titleholder Robin Reid (left) failed to jumpstart his fading career, getting eliminated by Tobias Webb in Reid's first Prizefighter bout.**

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

**BOUNCING BACK**
Gary Buckland rebounded from a TKO loss to European and British lightweight titleholder John Murray by winning the Prizefighter's junior lightweight tournament with a trio of victories, including a second-round knockout of Derry Matthews (pictured).

PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

him a world title shot, and that's exactly what happened."

Harrison cruised to a trio of Prizefighter victories in an event watched by a crowd of 5,000 and a Sky television audience of 600,000, their best yet (most of the events draw between 200,000 and 300,000 viewers—compared with 100,000 to 150,000 for standard Saturday night fights screened on the network). In his next fight, Harrison came from the brink of defeat to knock out his old rival, Michael Sprott, for the European title, which secured him a WBA title shot against David Haye (Harrison froze before being stopped in three).

With some fighters, however, Prizefighter has had the opposite effect. Reid's comeback was derailed when he was outpointed in his first fight. Hide won his opening bout but was ruled out from continuing because of a severe cut—and has not fought in over a year since then. Williams, the reigning British champion, lost his opening bout to a journeyman. But the most unfortunate was the rapidly rising, unbeaten British superfeatherweight champion Gary Sykes, who entered to earn a quick buck and to boost his reputation only to suffer a first-round knockout in the semifinals. His conqueror, Gary Buckland, is now set for a return with Sykes, this time with the British title on the line.

"The status of Prizefighter is now so high that the audience believes the winner should immediately fight for a world title, and certainly it's a very good steppingstone for a British, Commonwealth, or European title," says Eddie Hearn.

But their ambitions are not restricted to the home market. "The growth from an international television distribution viewpoint has been very interesting," said Hearn. "For example, we have just done a television distribution deal with an American network." It is also shown in Australia and several European countries.

Matchroom recently signed a new two-year deal with Sky, and, at the time of this writing, they were putting the finishing touches to their 18th Prizefighter, which is also their first 'international' event—a heavyweight tournament at the 8,000-capacity Alexander Palace on May 7. Those signed up include Kevin Johnson, Kali Meehan, the 13-0 (10) Ireland-based Cuban Mike Perez, the 22-0 (17) Russian Alexander Ustinov, and local stalwart Michael Sprott.

"The winner will be in a very good position to fight for a world title," Hearn rather optimistically predicts.

Their next step will be to cross the Atlantic and promote Prizefighter in the US.

"Our network connections through pool, darts, and fishing have opened the way for us to run shows in America," said Hearn. "They seem very keen on the Mexican-American market."

He is reluctant to release dates and details but says it will happen later this year.

Hearn acknowledges that boxing remains one of their smaller investments but says it has become their most vibrant. A spin-off from Prizefighter has been the steady stream of established professionals knocking on the Matchroom door.

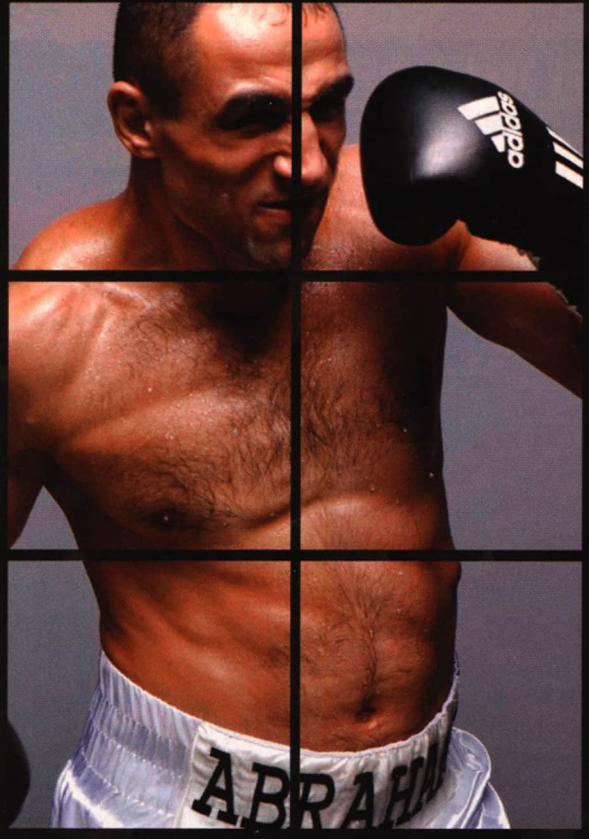
"We're getting two to three calling every week, but, outside of Prizefighter we only want to work with special boxers, men with world-title potential who we get on well with," he said. "We don't want to work with a-holes."

Matchroom recently signed two of Britain's leading, unbeaten fighters: 22-0 (14) middleweight Darren Barker (previously promoted by Mick Hennessy) and the 23-0 (16) welterweight Kell Brook (previously with Frank Warren), but most of their energies will go into their missionary work for Prizefighter.

The 62-year-old Barry Hearn is quick to extol its therapeutic impact:

"This tournament has got my enthusiasm back for the sport," he said. To which his 31-year-old son adds, "Yes, it would definitely be true to say we have rediscovered our love for the game." ■

***Gavin Evans is a London-based freelancer and a regular contributor to THE RING.***



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# WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

## Heavyweights

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Kevin McBride
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 12 Albert Sosnowski
Robert Helenius KO 9 Samuel Peter
Damian Wills KO 9 Arron Lyons
Kali Meehan KO 2 Valeri Semiskur
Michael Wallisch W 10 Yakup Saglam
DaVarryl Williamson KO 7 Michael Marrone
Vyacheslav Glazkov W 8 Denis Bakhtov
Alex Leapai KO 3 Okhello Peter
George Foreman III KO 1 Eric Lindsey
Danny Williams KO 1 Laszlo Toth
Flo Simba KO 1 Fernando Simoes de Almeida

## Cruiserweights

Krzysztof Wlodarczyk W 12 Francisco Palacios
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Marco Huck W 12 Ran Nakash
Garrett Wilson W 12 Omar Sheika
Mosese Sorovi KO 3 Peter Brennan
Lukasz Janik KO 2 Cristian Dolzanelli
Anthony McCracken Tech. Draw 1 Mohamed Azzaoui
Tom Zbikowski KO 1 Blake Warner
Tom Zbikowski W 4 Caleb Grummet

## Light Heavyweights

Gregory Soszynski W 12 Geard Ajetovic
Isaac Chilemba W 12 Vikapita Meroro
Doudou Ngumbu W 12 Mohamed Belkacem
Artur Hein D 12 Tony Averlant
Michael Oliveira W 10 Abel Adriel
Dustin Dirks KO 6 Roberto Cocco
Varol Vekiloglu KO 6 Mohammed Rasuli

## Super Middleweights

Robert Stieglitz W Disq. 10 Khoren Gevor
Shannan Taylor W 12 Tim Kanofski
Alexander Johnson W 10 Farah Ennis
Thomas Oosthuizen KO 9 Evert Bravo
Don George KO 8 Maxell Taylor
Daniel Pawsey KO 7 Les Piper
Francesco Passanante KO 7 Flash Issaka
Sergej Rozvadovskij KO 7 Thomas Ulrich
Vladine Biosse KO 5 Tim Connors
Adonis Stevenson KO 3 Derek Edwards
Matt Korobov W 6 Marcos Primera

## Middleweights

Nobuhiro Ishida KO 1 James Kirkland
Dmitry Pirog W 12 Javier Francisco Maciel
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 7 David Lemieux
Anthony Mundine W 10 Garth Wood
Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam W 12 Giovanni Lorenzo
Gennady Martirosyan KO 6 Valentin Ochoa
Yori Boy Campas W 10 Octavio Castro
Grzegorz Proksa KO 9 Pablo Navascues
Johannes Mwetupunga KO 8 Omar Shaick
Mada Maugo KO 7 Japhet Kaseba
Martin Murray KO 4 John Carvalho
Deandre Latimore W 8 Dennis Sharpe

## Junior Middleweights

Ryan Waters W 12 Gairy St. Clair
Mouez Fhima W 12 Carlos Herrera
Alberto Martinez W 10 Yidan Lugo
Erislandy Lara D 10 Carlos Molina
Roberto Garcia W 8 Jose Alfredo Flores
Joey Hernandez W Disq. 8 Angel Hernandez
Luis Collazo KO 3 Franklin Gonzalez
Adam Trupish KO 2 Rogerio Pereira
Kevin Rooney Jr. W 4 David Navarro

## Welterweights

Victor Ortiz W 12 Andre Berto
*(Wins WBC Title)*
Paul Malignaggi W 10 Jose Cotto
Dmitriy Salita W 8 Ronnie Warrior Jr
Denton Vassell W 12 Bethuel Ushona
Jorge Paez Jr. W 10 Jose Luis Castillo
Ramon Alvarez W 10 Edgar Arroyo
Franklin Mamani W 10 Jeremias Castillo
Samuel Colomban KO 4 Sapapetch Sor Sakaorat
Sadam Ali KO 3 Javier Perez
Felix Diaz KO 3 Andrey Berdyshev

## Lightweights

Robert Guerrero W 12 Michael Katsidis
John Murray W 12 Karim El Ouazghari
Guillaume Salingue W 12 Domenico Urbano
Matias Daniel Ferreyra Tech. Win 12 Oscar Bravo
Derry Mathews KO 1 Amir Unsworth
Alisher Rahimov W 12 Rustam Nugaev
Anthony Mezaache W 12 Aristides Perez
Henry Lundy W 10 Patrick Lopez

## Junior Lightweights

Takahiro Ao KO 4 Humberto Gutierrez
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Gamaliel Diaz W 12 Cesar Soto
Sipho Taliwe W 12 Vinvin Rufino
Domingo Nicolas Damigella W 12 Juciel Lima Nascimento
Luis Cruz W 10 Martin Honorio
Eloy Perez W 10 Alejandro Rodriguez
Sonny Manakane D 12 Robert Kopa Palue
Samir Kasmi W 10 Sylvain Chapelle
Salvador Sanchez W 8 Jose Carmona

## Featherweights

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 4 Hozumi Hasegawa
*(Wins WBC Title)*
Chris John W 12 Daud Cino Yordan
*(Retains WBA Title)*
Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 4 Jorge Solis
Orlando Salido KO 8 Juan Manuel Lopez
Mikey Garcia KO 10 Matt Remillard
Joksan Hernandez W 12 Ricardo Castillo
Jorge Lacierva W 12 Fernando Beltran Jr.
Francisco Leal W 10 Robert Marroquin

# JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Amir Khan Tech. Win 6 Paul McCloskey
*(Retains WBA Title)*
Marcos Maidana W 12 Erik Morales
Danny Garcia W 10 Nate Campbell
Breidis Prescott W 10 Bayan Jargal
Abdoulaye Soukouna D 10 Yvan Mendy
Jamie Spence W 10 Kristian Laight
Andre Gorges W 8 DeMarcus Corley

**PLOWING FORWARD**
**Junior welterweight Breidis Prescott hammers away at Bayan Jargal**

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

## Junior Featherweights

Toshiaki Nishioka KO 9 Mauricio Javier Munoz
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Takalani Ndlovu W 12 Steve Molitor
*(Wins IBF Title)*
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym Tech. Win 6 Eric Barcelona
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 2 Vicky Tahumil
Daiki Kameda KO 4 Jesus Martinez
Eric Morel KO 4 Luis Maldonado
Rendall Munroe W 12 Andrei Isaeu
Sergio Santillan W 12 Sergio Estrela
Orlando Rizo W 12 Alejandro Hernandez
Cruz Carbajal W 10 Miguel Piedras
Teon Kennedy W 12 Jorge Diaz

## Bantamweights

Vic Darchinyan Tech. Win 5 Yonnhy Perez
Mohamed Bouleghcha W 12 Michael Arango
Rodrigo Bracco W 10 Pio Antonio Nettuno
Etsuko Tada W 10 Ibeth Zamora Silva
Leo Santa Cruz KO 6 Stephane Jamoye
Stuart Hall KO 5 John Donnelly
Boy Dondee Pumar D 10 Rex Olisa
Roli Gasca KO 3 Ngaotawan Sithsaithong
Oscar Escandon KO 3 Luis Felipe Cuadrado

## Junior Bantamweights

Omar Narvaez W 12 Cesar Seda
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 5 Muhammad Nurfawaid
Denkaosan Kaovichit KO 2 Panca Silaban
Yota Sato W 10 Kohei Kono
Jerwin Ancajas W 10 Rex Tito
Jose Salgado KO 3 Everardo Morales

## Flyweights

Moruti Mthalane KO 5 Johnriel Casimero
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Hernan Marquez KO 11 Luis Concepcion
Wilbert Uicab W 12 Silvio Olteanu
Nestor Daniel Narvaes W 10 Luis Singo
Edgar Sosa KO 8 Kenichi Horikawa
Edgar Jimenez KO 7 Elvis Guillen

## Junior Flyweights

Giovani Segura KO 3 Ivan Calderon
*(Retains World Title)*
Donnie Nietes KO 1 Armando Vazquez
Ronald Barrera KO 6 Daniel Romero
Wisanu Kokietgym W 12 Michael Rodriguez
Yodmongkol Wor Saengthep W 10 Donny Mabao
Omari Kimweri KO 2 Mongkol Patanakan Gym

## Strawweights

Muhammad Rachman KO 9 Kwanthai Sithmorseng
Akira Yaegashi W 10 Norihito Tanaka
Denver Cuello KO 9 Samartlek Chaiyonggym
Lionel Legada W 10 Jetly Purisima
Wanheng Menayothin Tech. Win 6 Noli Morales

# RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart

## ACTION HEROES

**Location:** Las Vegas, NV • **Date:** April 9, 2011
**Television:** Pay-Per-View • **Promoter:** Golden Boy Promotions

# Robert Guerrero W 12 Michael Katsidis

In the co-main of the Marcos Maidana-Erik Morales card at the MGM Grand, "The Ghost" Guerrero made a statement by pounding out a brutal decision against gutsy Aussie Katsidis for a pair of "interim" lightweight belts (WBO and WBA).

It was the first time since 2007 that Guerrero had been able to set up camp outside his hometown of Gilroy, California. For the past few years, Guerrero's main concern has been his wife, Casey, who is now in remission after a life-threatening battle with cancer.

Despite Katsidis' relentless attacks, Guerrero proved too strong, too big, and too smart for the Australian whirlwind.

"What are you looking at?" was the opening punch thrown by Katsidis, during the referee's final instructions. The psych-out attempt did little to faze Guerrero, who kept Katsidis at the end of his jab throughout the first. When the two exchanged, it was Guerrero who scored the heaviest, with straight lefts down the middle.

The Ghost added right hooks and uppercuts in the second, limiting Katsidis to his usual attempts to slug his way in. A clean punch landed for the Aussie halfway through the second, however, and an off-balance Guerrero brushed his gloves on the canvas in an unofficial knockdown.

One-two combinations by Guerrero punctuated the third. Katsidis had success in the fourth, hammering Guerrero to the body, and the two closed the round in a crowd-rousing exchange.

Guerrero returned to jabbing in the fifth, occasionally hooking and hammering home a straight left. One left wobbled Katsidis, who started to show wear and tear by the end of the round.

Guerrero worked at range in the sixth. Sensing that the fight was escaping him, Katsidis upped his pressure in the seventh and swarmed Guerrero with a relentless body attack. Though blood streamed down his face, it was Katsidis' best round.

**GALLOPING "GHOST"** Guerrero spears Katsidis en route to career-best performance

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Lightweight
**Referee:** Russell Mora (Nevada)

**Robert Guerrero**
**Age:** 28
**Weight:** 134
**Residence:** Gilroy, CA
**Birthplace:** Gilroy, CA
**Record:** 28-1-1 (18)
**Ring Ranking:** 3

**Michael Katsidis**
**Age:** 30
**Weight:** 134
**Residence:**
Pattaya, Thailand
**Birthplace:**
Toowoomba, Australia
**Record:** 27-4 (22)
**Ring Ranking:** 5

Encouraged by the previous round, Katsidis came out banging to the body in the eighth. Despite the damage he appeared to be inflicting, the Australian was deducted two points for low blows by referee Russell Mora, which seemed excessive.

Mora somewhat evened the score in the ninth when he took a point off Guerrero's score for the same foul. Otherwise, the round was all "Ghost," who nearly took off Katsidis' head with an uppercut.

Still game but bloodied and battered, Katsidis went into desperation mode in the final three rounds—but Guerrero only got stronger. Straight lefts and more uppercuts had Katsidis on the verge of a knockdown by the final round.

All three Nevada judges saw Guerrero the clear victor with scores of 118-106 (Dave Moretti), 118-107 (C. J. Ross), and 117-108 (Patrcia Morse Jarman).

"He's the toughest guy I ever fought," Guerrero said of Katsidis. "One of the main things I did was keep the speed up and fire off shots. I was never hurt in the fight except for the low blows."

Katsidis did not show up at the post fight presser, opting for a precautionary medical exam, in which he was cleared.

Though this fight was at lightweight, Guerrero is eying the 140-pound division as well. "I'm ready for anyone," he said. "I want a shot at [Juan Manuel] Marquez, the winner of the main event [Maidana], Zab Judah or [Floyd] Mayweather. Bring them all. I'll take the best."

*Chris Cozzone*

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

**DANGEROUS DANNY** Garcia breezes to decision over Campbell

# Danny Garcia W 10 Nate Campbell

When former unified beltholder "The Galaxxy Warrior" Campbell lost to Walter Estrada last November, he told the press, "I know it's time for me to hang it up," and he retired.

Five months later, as the feature bout of the untelevised portion of the Marcos Maidana-Erik Morales bill at the MGM Grand, Campbell unretired to give undefeated Golden Boy prospect Danny Garcia a name win on his resume.

Looking his age and losing nearly every round, the 39-year-old Campbell was no match for the 23-year-old Philadelphian, who blasted him with power shots throughout 10 rounds. Campbell threw little more than verbal jabs over the course of the one-sided affair.

"I'm a helluva fighter," Campbell repeatedly warned Garcia, who ignored the conversation in favor of throwing big right hands that would, more often than not, land cleanly. Shaking his head with nearly every punch that landed, Campbell invited his bigger, younger foe to bring it on—and Garcia obliged.

Campbell pursued Garcia in the first, taking potshots throughout the round. In the second, Campbell egged Garcia in and took an equal amount of shots. The two took turns leading in the third with Campbell trying to load up on single right hands. The one or two times they landed, Garcia took them without noticeable effect.

Garcia started to unload his power shots in the fourth while Campbell did little but chat, prompting referee Robert Byrd to tell him to clam up. Clam up is what Campbell did in the fifth, physically anyway, while Garcia continued to bomb away despite the verbal assault.

In the sixth through eighth, Campbell chatted away while Garcia hounded him with continued pressure. The fight turned into a sparring session by the closing two rounds when both fighters were satisfied to cruise to the finish line without turning it into a slugfest.

All three Nevada judges saw a lopsided win for Garcia. Glenn Trowbridge had it a shutout at 100-90. Duane Ford scored it 99-91 while Al Lefkowitz saw it 98-92. It was the third straight loss for Campbell, who has been relegated to trialhorse status.

"I outboxed a smart veteran," Garcia said. "I knew he was going to hang in there and give me a tough fight. I also knew just to fight Nate Campbell would be good for me even if he's a little old."

*Chris Cozzone*

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Welterweight • **Referee:** Robert Byrd (Nevada)

| Danny Garcia | Nate Campbell |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 23 • **Weight:** 139 | **Age:** 39 • **Weight:** 140 |
| **Residence:** Philadelphia, PA | **Residence:** Jacksonville, FL |
| **Birthplace:** Philadelphia, PA | **Birthplace:** Jacksonville, FL |
| **Record:** 21-0 (14) | **Record:** 33-8-1 (25) |

# Nobuhiro Ishida KO 1 James Kirkland

In one of the biggest upsets of the year thus far, previously unbeaten Kirkland was not only defeated by the unheralded Ishida; he was dismantled in less than two minutes.

Over in less time than it took the fighters to make their ring entrances at the MGM Grand, the eight-round middleweight bout was supposed to showcase Kirkland's invincibility, but the allegedly light-punching Ishida flattened the oh-so-vulnerable former convict three times before referee Joe Cortez called off the slaughter.

The charismatic Kirkland had been joking with the media all week about chopping down the much-taller Ishida, but it was the underdog from a lighter division who showed up, axe in hand.

Seconds into the fight, Ishida flattened the hard-charging Kirkland with a quick left hook. Kirkland leapt to his feet, clearly hurt, but able to convince Cortez that he was ready to roll.

Roll is what Kirkland did—right onto the canvas—after Ishida blasted him with a left-right shortly after the fight resumed. Once again, Kirkland stood up and assumed a fighting stance, less convinced this time.

Not quite as anxious to mix it up with Ishida, Kirkland fell into a barely-used defensive position, but Ishida was all over him, pounding him down one more time with a right. This time, as Kirkland sought to roll over on his hands and knees, Cortez waved off the fight at the 1:52 mark.

"There's no three-knockdown rule in Vegas," Kirkland said in the ring while the crowd booed him. "I don't know why they stopped the fight. I'm really upset right now. That was a messed up call. I was telling him I wanted to keep fighting."

With the win, Ishida throws his name into the mix as a possible foe for middleweight king Sergio Martinez. He also bounced back from a split-decision loss in Mexico to Rigoberto Alvarez last October, a setback that stopped Ishida's 12-bout unbeaten streak.

"Kirkland didn't expect this from me," Ishida said. "He didn't respect what we had. He kept coming forward, and I kept going with my right—and it worked. I had my country on my side, and now I'm ready for a world title shot."

***Chris Cozzone***

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Middleweight • **Referee:** Joe Cortez (Nevada)

| Nobuhiro Ishida | James Kirkland |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 35 • **Weight:** 158 | **Age:** 27 • **Weight:** 158 |
| **Residence:** Osaka, Japan | **Residence:** Austin, TX |
| **Birthplace:** Kumamoto, Japan | **Birthplace:** Austin, TX |
| **Record:** 23-6-2 (8) | **Record:** 27-1 (24) |

**KAYO ARTIST KAYOED**
**Underdog Ishida hands Kirkland his first defeat**

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

**MAGIC MAN**
Malignaggi tags Cotto in comeback win

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

# Paul Malignaggi W 10 Jose Miguel Cotto

Having livened up the otherwise dreary weigh-in dressed as superhero "Magic Man," Brooklyn speedster Malignaggi, now at welterweight, needed very little magic to win a decision against Cotto, older brother of former conqueror Miguel.

In the opener of the pay-per-view broadcast of the Marcos Maidana-Erik Morales card at the MGM Grand, Malignaggi breezed through everything his Puerto Rican foe had to offer and weathered a cut over his left eye on his way to the unanimous win most boxing critics expected.

Cotto came out swinging, however, and, with his first punch, landed a bomb of a left hand that had Malignaggi reeling. Cotto continued forcing Malignaggi to dance for the first few rounds, pressuring the speedster with slower-thrown but heavier punches.

Around the fourth round, having survived his opponent's hardest punches, Malignaggi took over as he boxed Cotto from the outside. Despite the Magic Man having suffered a cut from an accidental headbutt over his left eye in the fifth, Cotto's pace dwindled as Malignaggi's picked up. Encouraged by the sight of blood, Cotto tried to find a home for his left, but Malignaggi countered nicely with four- and five-punch combinations.

As Malignaggi pocketed the rounds, he became increasingly dominant, trying at times to take the fight to Cotto. Though boxing circles around Cotto, Malignaggi failed in his attempts to hurt his foe.

Cotto swapped strategies in the ninth and 10th, going from pursued to pursuer. Hoping to lure his man in, Cotto backed up to the ropes. It didn't work. Malignaggi continued to flurry in and out of range, picking up two more rounds in the process.

All three Nevada judges saw a clear win for Malignaggi, scoring it 99-91 twice (Richard Ocasio and Duane Ford) and 97-92 (Lisa Giampa).

"I boxed smart and computed a good game plan," Malignaggi said. "I wanted to pick up the pace in the second half of the fight. All those people who say I don't pick up the pace? I'm sick of that s___. Seriously. But it really felt good to be back in the spotlight and get a good 'W.'"

Days later, Malignaggi told the press that he had ruptured the tendon on his right knuckle in the fight. The injury is expected to keep him out until August or possibly later.

*Chris Cozzone*

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Welterweight
**Referee:** Kenny Bayless (Nevada)

**Paulie Malignaggi**
**Age:** 30
**Weight:** 147
**Residence:** Brooklyn, NY
**Birthplace:** Brooklyn, NY
**Record:** 28-4 (6)

**Jose Miguel Cotto**
**Age:** 33
**Weight:** 147
**Residence:** Caguas, Puerto Rico
**Birthplace:** Caguas, Puerto Rico
**Record:** 32-3-1 (24)

# Amir Khan Tech. Dec. 6 Paul McCloskey

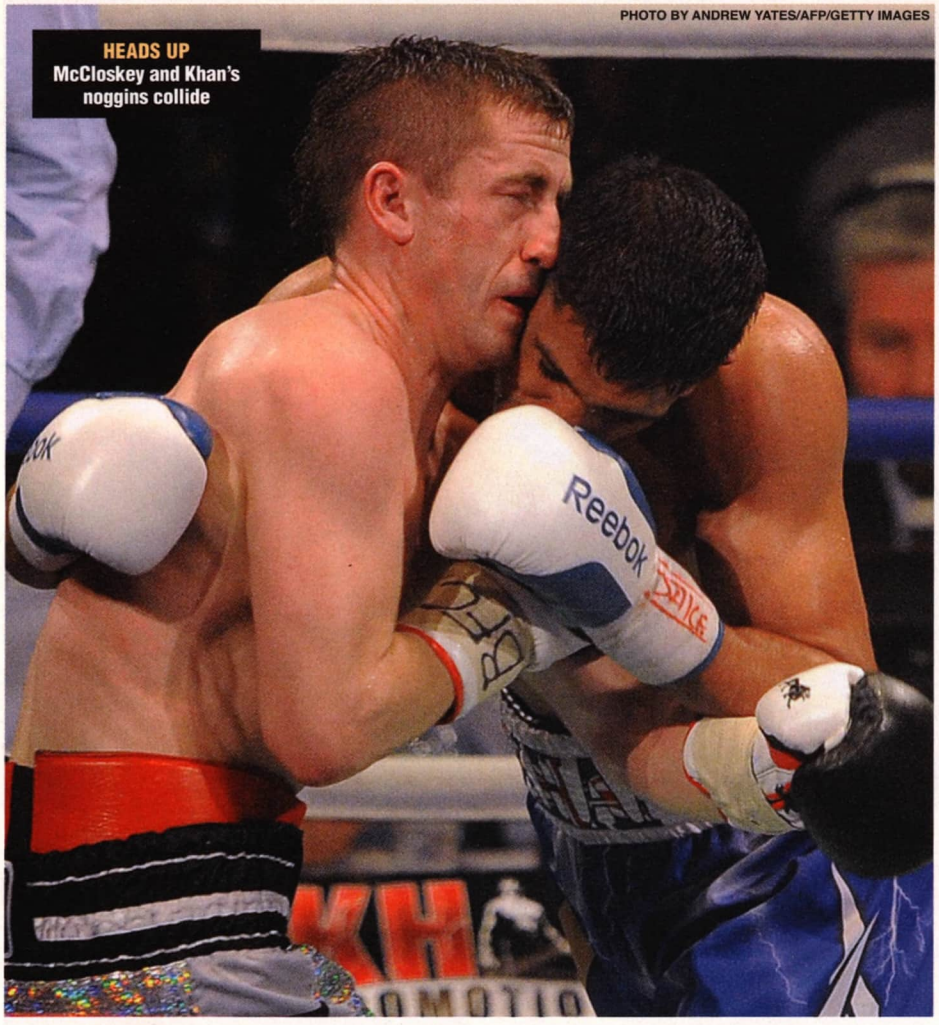



PHOTO BY ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**HEADS UP**
McCloskey and Khan's noggins collide

Next up for Khan is a July 23 showdown for the vacant RING junior welterweight championship with top-ranked Timothy Bradley, who has been criticized for being a headbutt artist. In his homecoming warm-up against McCloskey, Khan showed he could be headstrong as well.

Khan's sixth defense of the WBA belt drew a lively crowd of 17,125 to the M.E.N. Arena. It was an awkward matchup, but "King Khan" fought a smart-yet-aggressive fight in dominating southpaw McCloskey before an accidental clash of heads resulted in a premature ending.

With 1:03 remaining in the sixth round, referee Luis Pabon called time after a hard collision of heads, which occurred as Khan came forward to unleash another combination. Pabon first looked at Khan, who thought he was cut over his right eye, only to turn and find McCloskey with a vertical gash above his left eye. After an examination by the ringside doctor, Pabon signaled it was over, and the fight went to the scorecards.

All three English judges—John Foster, Terry O'Connor, and Dave Parris—had it 60-54, with Khan winning each round, including the truncated sixth. THE RING had the same tally.

McCloskey showed no signs of disagreement with the stoppage. Not until he had a microphone in his face, anyway.

"Trust me, Amir was tiring," McCloskey said afterward. "We all know

# Omar Narvaez W 12 Cesar Seda

In the postfight dinner at the Argos Hotel, Narvaez talked with the young Puerto Rican promoter Miguel "Quique" Roman about his unanimous decision victory against "Junito" Seda. "This kid is really good: He is strong, he is fast, he is brave," Narvaez said. "I think he will be a world champion in the future. He was the most difficult opponent I've had, and, remember, I have made, with this one, 20 world title defenses."

Roman nodded his head and said: "The problem with you, champion, is your boxing, because you move so well. You are unpredictable." With a smile, Narvaez replied: "That's the secret, my friend."

Earlier in the night, Narvaez had outpointed mandatory contender Seda to defend his WBO junior bantamweight belt for the second time. The bout was held in front of 3,500 people at Estudiantes de Bahía Blanca Club. Despite advantages of 10 years in age and three inches in height, Seda was unable to overcome a much wider gap in experience. Narvaez has 287 rounds in his 36 bouts as pro while Seda has 88 rounds in 21 fights and had only once gone 10 rounds, when he defeated Jose Lopez in August 2010.

After losing the first three rounds, as he always seems to do, Narvaez established his boxing in the fourth. Landing more punches,

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Bantamweight
**Location:** Buenos Aires, Argentina
**Date:** April 15, 2011
**Promoter:** Osvaldo Rivero
**Referee:** Raul Caiz Jr. (USA)

**Omar Narváez**
**Age:** 35 • **Weight:** 114¼
**Residence:** Trelew, Argentina
**Birthplace:** Trelew, Argentina
**Record:** 34-0-2 (19)
**RING Ranking:** 4

**Cesar Seda**
**Age:** 25 • **Weight:** 114¾
**Residence:** Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico
**Birthplace:** Ponce, Puerto Rico
**Record:** 20-1-0 (15)
**RING Ranking:** 10

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Welterweight
**Location:** Manchester, England • **Date:** April 16, 2011
**Television:** HBO
**Promoters:** Golden Boy Promotions, Khan Promotions
**Referee:** Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico)

| Amir Khan | Paul McCloskey |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 24 • **Weight:** 139 | **Age:** 31 |
| **Residence:** Bolton, England | **Weight:** 139 |
| **Birthplace:** Bolton, England | **Residence:** Dungiven, Northern Ireland |
| **Record:** 25-1 (17) | **Birthplace:** Derry, Northern Ireland |
| **Ring Ranking:** 2 | **Record:** 22-1 (12) |

he struggled to make weight. I could see it at the weigh-in; he was pale as a ghost. He was tired after the second or third round. He was burning up energy. I was getting stronger as the fight went on."

Khan neutralized McCloskey's right hand, the Northern Irishman's best weapon, with his much quicker jab. He kept his hands up and continuously circled to his right in an attempt to create angles while McCloskey fought with his hands low and appeared to be searching for one big shot. Khan continually came forward with three and four-punch bursts and backed off before McCloskey could counter. He wobbled McCloskey badly with a combination midway through the sixth, but the clash of heads came half a minute later.

The CompuBox numbers backed the judges' scores. Khan was much busier, landing 88 total shots, compared to 44 for McCloskey.

"There's no motivation for me to fight Paul again," Khan said. "I was beating him for the full six rounds. My next goal is to fight Timothy Bradley to unify the division. Paul McCloskey is at the European level, and I'm at the world-class level.

"If the fight would have carried on, Paul McCloskey would have got hurt badly."

Narvaez used bending and sidestepping to avoid the long shots of his opponent. When he started to go on the attack in the fifth round, Seda struggled going in reverse, especially when "The Hurricane" sent long lefts into his face. Referee Raul Caiz Jr. deducted one point from Seda in the fifth for low blows. Narvaez continued to pile up the points from there, and, by the ninth, Seda was looking confused.

In the last round, Seda tried unsuccessfully to find the kayo punch that by then was his only hope of winning. He took the round, clearly, but he never connected with a real solid punch as Narvaez moved around the ring and out of danger.

The decision was unanimous: Donald Trella (USA) had it 115-112, while Luis Doffi (Argentina) and Levi Martinez (USA) each had it 117-110, all for The Hurricane. The Ring had it 117-112 for Narvaez.

"I have a lot of respect for Seda, but I used all my experience in the ring," Narvaez said. "Now they are talking about a fight with Hugo Cazares or even Vic Darchinyan. I have no problem with fighting anybody because, at 35, I still have love and interest in boxing. The day I do not have interest in training, I will hang up my gloves."

***Carlos Irusta***

# Guillermo Rigondeaux KO 1 Willie Casey

The tumultuous roars of encouragement and expectation that greeted Casey into the ring at the Citywest Convention Centre swiftly gave way to stunned silence as the local hero succumbed to the multitalented Rigondeaux. The referee, Stanley Christodoulou, made a timely intervention at 2:38 of the first round. Casey, floored twice and under sustained attack, offered no argument.

Oddly nicknamed "Big Bang" for someone who is not a concussive puncher, Casey proved pathetically inept in his first foray into the world-class ranks. He was adamant afterward, however, that if another chance came along he would grab it.

"This was a bad loss, but I'll be back," he vowed. "The real test for me is how I get over this defeat and perform in my next fight. Bernard Dunne came back [after a first round loss to Kiko Martinez] and won a world title. I aim to pick myself up and be successful like Bernard."

Rigondeaux's trainer, Ronnie Shields, offered consolation to the Irishman by telling him he lost to a potential all-time great. Rigondeaux will clean up the 122-pound, 126-pound, and 130-pound divisions before he retires, predicted the man who has worked with legends such as Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield. Few of the approximately 4,000 in attendance would have doubted him.

Rigondeaux, making his first defense of the WBA "interim" trinket he picked up in winning a disappointing split decision against Ricardo Cordoba last November, is managed by Irishman Gary Hyde. That made it easy to do the deal for the Casey fight, though Willie had to sacrifice his European title to take on the Cuban defector.

After just one minute of harmless sparring by the two southpaws, Casey was clearly hurt by a solid bodyshot and went into swift retreat. Rigondeaux caught up with him near the ropes and floored him with a swift left to the head. Casey rose quickly but could do nothing to halt the Cuban's relentless advance. A perfectly timed overhand left knocked him down again. Back up on wobbly legs, Casey looked ready to go back to the floor after taking a few more precise punches, and Christodoulou cradled him in his arms to signal the end of the mismatch.

Casey, accepting his loss with dignity and an apparent sense of relief that it was over, said he was ready to go home and spend time with his wife and kids. For Rigondeaux, there remains no such luxury, having defected from Cuba in 2009 to launch his professional career.

***Patrick Myler***

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Featherweight
**Location:** Dublin, Ireland • **Date:** March 19, 2011
**Promoters:** Dolphil Promotions, Nowhere2Hyde Promotions
**Referee:** Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa)

| Guillermo Rigondeaux | Willie Casey |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 30 | **Age:** 29 |
| **Weight:** 121 | **Weight:** 121¼ |
| **Residence:** Miami, FL | **Residence:** Limerick, Ireland |
| **Birthplace:** Santiago de Cuba, Cuba | **Birthplace:** Limerick, Ireland |
| **Record:** 8-0 (6) | **Record:** 11-1 (7) |
| **Ring Ranking:** 6 | |

# Anthony Mundine W 10 Garth Wood

One of the more difficult assignments for any boxer is to avenge a knockout defeat in an immediate rematch. Mundine accomplished that feat and resuscitated his career in the process with a unanimous points win that avenged last December's shocking fifth-round knockout loss to *The Contender Australia* tournament champion Wood. At the age of 36, it remains to be seen whether it will lead to significant achievements for Mundine or simply prolong his career.

Mundine's improved focus for this match was evident in the opening seconds of round one, when his hands were held high in defense. Showing further improved technique, Wood took the opportunity to work the body with left and right hooks.

A confident Wood pressed forward in round two, landing at times, but also giving Mundine the chance to score uppercuts as he bulled forward. This continued for the next three rounds, with Wood's quantity punches up against Mundine's fewer but more eye-catching shots.

"From the Hood" Wood appeared to take control in round six as Mundine tired, but "The Man" responded strongly in round seven. Wood rallied in round eight and appeared to be surging to victory until a surprise knockdown in round nine. In the final seconds of the stanza, Mundine landed a left hook to Wood's jaw as their legs tangled. Wood's left glove only touched the canvas as he leaned off balance. Hesitant referee Derek Milham then issued an eight count to a clearheaded Wood.

In the first minute of the final round, Mundine was backed into a corner, then managed to land two sweetly timed right uppercuts that knocked Wood to the canvas. After falling forward into the ropes, a dazed Woods regained his feet, survived the count, and then desperately pressed forward again. Guilty of holding throughout the fight, Mundine clinched firmly in the final minute as Wood kept punching, and referee Milham deducted one point before the final bell.

All three Australian judges scored the fight for Mundine: Paul Tapley 96-92, Cyril Cairns 95-92, and Adrian Cairns 95-93. THE RING had Mundine winning, 94-93.

"I rose to the occasion," Mundine said. "That's not just a sign of a champion—it's the sign of a legend."

Both Mundine-Wood fights were held at middleweight. A former super middleweight and middleweight beltholder, Mundine repeated his goal of moving down to junior middleweight to win another title belt.

***Paul Upham***

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Middleweight • **Location:** Brisbane, Australia
**Date:** April 13, 2011 • **Promoter:** Tony Mundine
**Referee:** Derek Milham (Australia)

| Anthony Mundine | Garth Wood |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 36 • **Weight:** 159½ | **Age:** 32 • **Weight:** 159½ |
| **Residence:** Sydney, Australia | **Residence:** Sydney, Australia |
| **Birthplace:** Sydney, Australia | **Birthplace:** Sydney, Australia |
| **Record:** 41-4 (24) | **Record:** 10-2-1 (6) |

**REMATCH REVERSAL**
Mundine avenges loss to Wood

PHOTO BY JONATHAN WOOD/GETTY IMAGES

# Tomasz Adamek W 12 Kevin McBride

Billed as "The Last Big Hurdle," it was the final tuneup for contender Adamek before his September 10 encounter in Poland with THE RING's top-rated heavyweight, Vitali Klitschko.

And Adamek seemed to treat the bout as just that: a dress rehearsal.

Adamek, 215, outboxed McBride, best known for being the last man to fight Mike Tyson, over 12 uneventful rounds before 7,653 raucous fans at the Prudential Center.

McBride was grossly out of shape as rumors swirled that "The Clones Colossus" had barely trained. And Adamek took advantage, targeting McBride's soft midsection and touching him to the body with jabs and crisp hooks.

Adamek continued, round after round, to stick his jab and deliver quick combinations, getting out of harm's way before McBride could return anything of consequence. Adamek continued to concentrate almost exclusively on the body over the first half of the fight.

McBride, meanwhile, looked to make it an ugly fight, using roughhouse tactics and trying to bully Adamek to the ropes and impose his size.

When Adamek did reach McBride's chin, his punches didn't seem to have much effect on the 6'6" Irishman.

In the seventh round, though, Adamek finally landed something of consequence as he busted up McBride's left eye with a combination. With McBride bleeding, Adamek finally opened up his attack, pouncing on his foe and letting his hands go. McBride continued to push down on Adamek's head in clinches in the seventh, forcing referee Randy Neumann to deduct a point. By the end of the pivotal round, McBride's face was a crimson mask with a cut on the forehead as well.

As McBride appeared gassed down the stretch, he threw half-hearted punches intermittently while Adamek continued to stick and move. Adamek finally went for the kill in the 12th, but he was unable to faze McBride.

Judges Lynee Carter (New Jersey) and Larry Hazzard Jr. (New Jersey) both scored it 119-108 while Robert Grasso (Pennsylvania) had it a shutout at 120-107. THE RING agreed with Grasso's tally.

McBride has won just twice since the monumental upset of Tyson in '05, losing by knockout to the likes of Mike Mollo and Andrew Golota, and by decision to Zack Page and Matt Skelton. He announced his retirement immediately following the one-sided loss.

Adamek, the former RING cruiserweight champion, will go on to the biggest fight of his career, his tuneup safely out of the way.

"It was a very good 12 rounds, practice before the big fight. I'm happy," Adamek said. "I'm ready for the fight."

*Mike Coppinger*

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Heavyweight • **Location:** Newark, NJ
**Date:** April 9, 2011 • **Television:** Pay-Per-View
**Promoters:** Main Events, Ziggy Promotions
**Referee:** Randy Neumann (New Jersey)

| Tomasz Adamek | Kevin McBride |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 34 • **Weight:** 215 | **Age:** 37 |
| **Residence:** Jersey City, NJ | **Weight:** 285 |
| **Birthplace:** Zywiec, Poland | **Residence:** Boston, MA |
| **Record:** 44-1 (28) | **Birthplace:** Clones, Ireland |
| **RING Ranking:** 3 | **Record:** 35-9-1 (29) |

**DRESS REHEARSAL**
Adamek attacks McBride's flabby gut

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

# TRIPLEHEADER

**Location:** Kobe, Japan • **Date:** April 8, 2011 • **Promoter:** Teiken Promotions

## Jhonny Gonzalez KO 4 Hozumi Hasegawa

### MATCH STATS

**Division:** Featherweight • **Referee:** Mike Griffin (Canada)

| Jhonny Gonzalez | Hozumi Hasegawa |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 29 • **Weight:** 125¾ | **Age:** 30 |
| **Residence:** Mexico City, Mexico | **Weight:** 125¾ |
| **Birthplace:** Pachuca, Mexico | **Residence:** Kobe, Japan |
| **Record:** 48-7 (42) | **Birthplace:** Nishiwaki, Japan |
| **Ring Ranking:** 10 | **Record:** 29-4 (12) |

In the last bout of the tripleheader at World Memorial Hall, hard-hitting Mexican Gonzalez captured the WBC featherweight belt as he stunned the audience with a one-punch stoppage of defending beltholder Hasegawa at 0:58 of the fourth round.

**HASEGAWA HAMMERED**
Gonzalez blasts Hasegawa with a right

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

## Toshiaki Nishioka KO 9 Mauricio Munoz

Nishioka scored his sixth defense of the WBC junior featherweight belt as he patiently outjabbed and outpunched Munoz before finally catching the game challenger with a smashing left en route to a spectacular knockout at 3:07 of the ninth round in the second bout of the tripleheader at World Memorial Hall.

Nishioka, nine years Munoz' senior, showed his expertise in handling the energetic Argentine, who occasionally threw punches in combination and had the titlist on the defensive. After the fourth, the WBC open scoring system indicated 39-37 three times, all for the southpaw Nishioka. After the eighth, Nishioka was still leading on points: 78-74 twice and 78-75.

Late in the fatal ninth, Nishioka exploded his signature left uppercut into the chin of the still strong Munoz, who almost lost his balance. Nishioka then let loose with solid combinations before connecting with a vicious southpaw left to the face that put the fading Argentine on the deck just before the bell.

**SIXTH DEFENSE**
Nishioka drives home a left

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Hasegawa, a Japanese southpaw who held the WBC bantamweight belt through 10 defenses, directly moved up to the feather category and acquired the WBC belt by unanimously decisioning Juan Carlos Burgos of Mexico last November.

Mandatory challenger Gonzalez was his first defense. The ex-WBO 118-pound ruler entered having registered seven consecutive stoppages after suffering a bad kayo defeat against Toshiaki Nishioka in three rounds in May 2009.

Hasegawa, moving in and out, was aggressive from the outset, scoring with quick jabs and southpaw lefts to the midsection. Gonzalez, however, occasionally connected with sickle-like looping left hooks against the fast-moving southpaw. Hasegawa maintained the pressure as he consistently attacked the Mexican in the first three sessions.

Early in the fourth, Gonzalez abruptly threw a wild, long, and well-timed right hook to the face of Hasegawa, who went down from the shot. He desperately stood up on rubbery legs, which understandably caused referee Mike Griffin to call a halt. It was a shocking defeat for the Japanese hero.

Hasegawa had been leading on points after the third round—30-27 and 29-28 (twice)—and he might have gotten a little careless. But Gonzalez's bomb was solid, strong, and smashing enough to sink Hasegawa.

The crestfallen Hasegawa said, "I couldn't see the last punch thrown by Gonzalez. I might have been just watching his most dangerous weapon, the left hand, so I didn't pay much attention to his right hand. Then came his right. It was strong and effective. I felt it solidly. I wanted to go on, but it's the referee's decision to stop it or to have it go on. I've no claim on his decision. Let me consider whether I'll continue fighting or not. Should I decide to go on fighting, I must be more serious to do so."

Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, the trainer of the newly crowned beltholder, said, "Hasegawa was very fast, too fast for Jhonny to catch with his left hand. So, after the second round, I advised Jhonny to try to land a big right. Our strategy was successful."

*Joe Koizumi*

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Featherweight
**Referee:** Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand)

| Toshiaki Nishioka | Mauricio Munoz |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 34 | **Age:** 25 |
| **Weight:** 121¾ | **Weight:** 121 |
| **Residence:** Tokyo, Japan | **Residence:** San Juan, Argentina |
| **Birthplace:** Kakogawa, Japan | **Birthplace:** San Juan Argentina |
| **Record:** 38-4-3 (24) | **Record:** 21-3 (9) |
| **Ring Ranking:** 1 | |

The referee, Anek Hongtongkam, urged Munoz to go on, but the Argentine couldn't resume fighting due to the heavy damage. Munoz had worked his way into the shot at the belt by winning five straight bouts in Argentina against dubious opposition.

Still, it was a very impressive victory for Nishioka, who dedicated his victory to the many victims of earthquake and tsunami that had ravaged the island nation just 27 days before.

*Joe Koizumi*

# Takahiro Ao KO 4 Humberto Gutierrez

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Lightweight
**Referee:** John Schorle (USA)

**Takahiro Ao**
**Age:** 27 • **Weight:** 130
**Residence:** Tokyo, Japan
**Birthplace:** Ichihara, Japan
**Record:** 21-2-1 (10)
**Ring Ranking:** 8

**Humberto Gutierrez**
**Age:** 22 • **Weight:** 130
**Residence:** Los Mochis, Mexico
**Birthplace:** Los Mochis, Mexico
**Record:** 28-3-1 (20)

Japanese southpaw Ao looked impressive in successfully making his initial defense of the WBC junior lightweight belt as he outhustled Gutierrez from the outset, entirely controlled the bout with effective combinations, and finally sank the Mexican with a vicious right hook to the belly at 1:06 of the fourth round.

It was the first bout of the WBC title-belt tripleheader and an encounter of pugnacious southpaws which fully entertained the sellout crowd at the World Memorial Hall. Ao, who had dethroned Germany's Vitaly Tajbert via unanimous nod here last November, took control from the outset with an effective attack as he pressed the action from the first round. Ao, a former six-time national amateur high school champ, steadily piled up points as he gamely mixed it up. He consistently got the better of the exchanges with the taller but slower Mexican.

The third round saw Ao whip the flat-footed Gutierrez from all angles, but Gutierrez, five years Ao's junior, managed to land a southpaw right hook that bewildered Ao for the first time in the contest. But it still appeared to be Ao's round.

In round four, Ao wasted no time starting his attack, and he quickly dug a very solid right hook to the liver. Gutierrez, in agony, fell on all fours and was unable to beat the count of referee John Schorle.

The official tallies before the stoppage were as follows: Max DeLuca (USA) and Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand) both had it 30-27, and Rey Danseco (Philippines) scored it 29-28, all in favor of Ao.

Ao displayed his development in the areas of aggressiveness and power punching and showed that his days of being just a clever and cautious speedster are perhaps finished. Overall, Ao looked physically and mentally strong.

*Joe Koizumi*

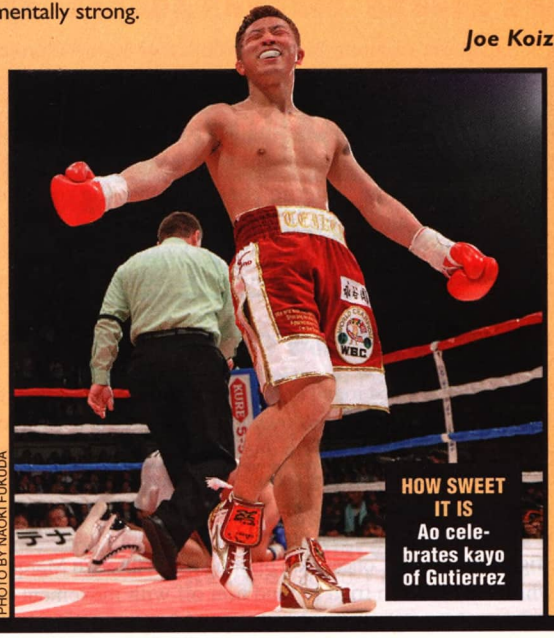


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

**HOW SWEET IT IS** Ao celebrates kayo of Gutierrez

# Giovani Segura KO 3 Ivan Calderon

Their rematch was billed "La Revancha" (The Revenge), but the second clash between Segura and Calderon only resulted in a more emphatic win for world junior flyweight champion Segura.

Segura electrified the packed house at Auditorio del Estado midway through the third round with a series of unanswered bodyshots that put Calderon on the floor. The former champion was unable to beat the count of referee Sam Viruet, bringing an abrupt end to the rematch of 2010's best fight, which Segura won by eighth-round stoppage to take the title from Calderon.

"I was hurt," Calderon told BoxingScene.com a few days after the rematch. "It was a good solid blow to the pit of my stomach, and he injured my nose in the second round. I went to a knee and decided to stay there for the count. I was not going to get hurt."

Calderon started well. Clearly intent on avoiding the slugfest that ensued when the two southpaws clashed last August, "Iron Boy" boxed well and appeared to take the first two rounds. He fought in the center of the ring, utilized his footwork to keep Segura missing, jabbed effectively, and tied up when on the inside. Meanwhile, Segura focused on Calderon's body, though some of his hooks found their way below the belt-line, finally resulting in a warning from Viruet with 40 seconds remaining in the seeond round.

Segura, who had advantages of four inches in height and six inches in reach, finally

**REPEAT PERFORMANCE**
**Segura's bodyshots were too much for Calderon**

PHOTO BY GERMAN VILASENOR

# Hernan Marquez KO 11 Luis Concepcion

On paper, the matchup between WBA flyweight beltholder Concepcion and Marquez promised high-octane explosiveness, a rarity among the little big men.

First, Concepcion was riding a 19-fight winning streak capped by a 90-second blowout of Denkaosan Kaovichit five months earlier to win the "interim" belt. Second, the southpaw Marquez boasted 22 knockouts in 29 wins and enjoyed moments of success last July before losing to Nonito Donaire. He rebounded with back-to-back knockouts, including a one-rounder in his previous outing.

As good as the bout appeared in theory, the reality was even better, a potential Fight of the Year.

Marquez suffered a first round knockdown, only to answer with his own, then scored two more knockdown in rounds three and 10 before the physician intervened in the 11th due to swelling around Concepcion's eyes. It was a disappointing ending for Concepcion's hometown crowd at the Arena Roberto Duran in Panama City, but that was mitigated by the vigorous action that preceded it.

The fight began with Concepcion blasting rights through Marquez' guard while the Mexican tried to fend him off with movement and counters. A scorching right to the chin dumped Marquez at the midway mark, and Concepcion's furious follow-ups had Marquez on the verge of defeat.

Confronted with a fight-or-flight decision, Marquez fired back furiously and shook Concepcion with a left. Moments before the bell and while fielding another volley of leather, Marquez suddenly dropped Concepcion with a huge left.

After the two exchanged more fire in the second, a Marquez hook sent Concepcion spinning to the floor early in the third. Like Marquez, Concepcion retaliated with gusto, but Marquez almost scored another knockdown with a right-left and a vicious minute-long assault later in the round.

The exchanges continued in rounds four through six with Marquez earning an edge. After relatively quiet seventh and eighth rounds, Concepcion staged a mini-rally in the ninth and the first half of the 10th, but, in the final minute, Marquez pierced Concepcion's face with clean punches and a sweeping right that floored the Panamanian a third time. Even so, Concepcion conjured another improbable rally that had the partisan crowd roaring for a dramatic finish.

Alas, it wasn't to be due to the physician's decision, which followed a lengthy examination. Given that it was a less-than-satisfying ending to a highly satisfying thriller, a rematch wouldn't be out of the question.

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Flyweight • **Location:** Mexicali, Mexico
**Date:** April 2, 2011 • **Television:** Pay-Per-View
**Promoters:** Zanfer Promotions, PR Best Boxing
**Referee:** Sam Viruet (USA)

| Giovani Segura | Ivan Calderon |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 29 | **Age:** 36 |
| **Weight:** 107¾ | **Weight:** 107¾ |
| **Residence:** Bell, California | **Residence:** Guaynabo, Puerto Rico |
| **Birthplace:** Guerrero, Mexico | **Birthplace:** Guaynabo, Puerto Rico |
| **Record:** 27-1-1 (22) | **Record:** 34-2-1 (6) |
| **Ring Ranking:** Champion | **Ring Ranking:** 4 |

trapped Calderon against the ropes one minute into the third. He unleashed a flurry to Calderon's midsection and then finished it off with two right hooks upstairs. Calderon worked his way out, only to get trapped again half a minute later after a Segura right to the head sent him reeling. Iron Boy didn't escape this time.

Segura fired a four-punch volley to the body that put Calderon on his knees. It appeared that the third punch in the sequence, a right hook, was the one that did the most damage. Segura got away with a late right to the head that landed just before Calderon's knees touched, and Viruet reached 10 at the 1:39 mark.

A jubilant Segura, who had turned 29 one day before the fight, donated his gloves to the city of Mexicali afterward. "I want to leave my gloves here in Mexicali," he said. "Thank you to all of you. I want to wish Mexicali and myself a happy birthday."

Calderon intends to fight on. He's reportedly planning to return to 105 pounds, where he held the WBO belt from 2003 to 2007 and made 11 defenses. Segura was unofficially 121 pounds when he entered the ring against Calderon. "I can take on [fighters] who weigh 112, but not those who weigh 127," Calderon told BoxingScene.com. "I have a couple of years left."

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Flyweight
**Location:** Panama City, Panama
**Date:** April 2, 2011
**Promoter:** Zanfer Promotions
**Referee:** Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico)

**Hernan Marquez**
**Age:** 22 • **Weight:** 112
**Residence:** Empalme, Mexico
**Birthplace:** Empalme, Mexico
**Record:** 30-2 (23)
**Ring Ranking:** 3

**Luis Concepcion**
**Age:** 25 • **Weight:** 112
**Residence:** Panama City, Panama
**Birthplace:** Panama City, Panama
**Record:** 22-2 (17)
**Ring Ranking:** 4

## Edgar Sosa KO 8 Kenichi Horikawa

In a warm-up for his likely shot at flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam later this year, Sosa got a tougher fight than he'd anticipated out of determined underdog Horikawa before a cut brought an early finish.

Sosa drew 12,000 fans to Arena Mexico for his tuneup with Horikawa, a stubborn opponent with a good chin but little power who had dropped two of his previous three bouts. Horikawa was coming off a seventh-round stoppage loss at junior flyweight to Florante Condes last November in the Philippines.

Horikawa gave a spirited effort against the hometown favorite. He put his slightly longer reach to good use, jabbing well as he worked his way inside. The pressure seemed to surprise Sosa, who got off to a slow start, though he did bloody Horikawa's nose in the opening round.

Sosa, who had the much faster hands, gradually and patiently adjusted to Horikawa's pressure and began to find a home for his hooks, particularly to the body. He battered the underdog in the fourth with liver shots, and, in the sixth, he cut Horikawa badly above his left eyebrow with a right hand.

The cut worsened in the eighth as Sosa patiently targeted it with right hands. Horikawa never let up and kept pressing forward. He continued to move in and out of the pocket, giving as good as he got and scoring frequently with the jab. But with 36 seconds remaining in the round, referee Frank Garza called time to allow the ringside physician to take another look at the cut. After a very brief glance, Dr. Horacio Ramirez determined that Horikawa could not continue, and Garza stopped the fight.

Horikawa accepted his fate with a pained expression and a shake of the head. He still seemed quite energetic as he enthusiastically acknowledged the crowd, and no one seemed to be in any kind of hurry to tend to his cut.

The three American judges each had Sosa well ahead at the time of the stoppage. Herb Santos (Nevada) scored it 70-62, Jerry Venzor (Texas) had it 70-63, and Miguel Acuna (Texas) saw it 68-65, all for Sosa. Things got worse afterward for Horikawa, who reportedly had $15,000 stolen from a safe in his hotel room.

It was Sosa's fifth straight win and fourth by stoppage since a controversial loss to Rodel Mayol in November 2009 that cost Sosa a junior flyweight belt. Sosa was stopped in the second round, shortly after a headbutt from Mayol. He moved up in weight after the loss.

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Flyweight • **Location:** Mexico City, Mexico
**Date:** April 2, 2011 • **Promoter:** Boxeo de Gala
**Referee:** Frank Garza (USA)

**Edgar Sosa**
**Age:** 31 • **Weight:** 112
**Residence & Birthplace:** Mexico City, Mexico
**Record:** 42-6 (25)
**Ring Ranking:** 10

**Kenichi Horikawa**
**Age:** 31 • **Weight:** 112
**Residence & Birthplace:** Kyoto, Japan
**Record:** 20-10-1 (4)

# Marco Huck W 12 Ran Nakash

The days of defining the cruiserweight division as a walloping wasteland are changing, thanks to a solid supply of rumblers such as Huck and from bouts like Huck's entertaining alphabet-belt defense against unsung-but-worthy challenger Nakash.

Huck notched a unanimous decision at boisterous Gerry Weber Arena for his sixth defense of the WBO belt, but Nakash made him work for it. Huck has brawled his way into becoming one of Europe's most consistently exciting fighters, but one has to wonder if recent, demanding fights such as this one with Nakash won't take an eventual toll before promoter Sauerland Event's proposed cruiserweight tournament materializes.

Nakash came in with less than a week's notice after Giacobbe Fragomeni withdrew due to a sparring cut. Nakash, a close-combat instructor in the Israeli armed forces, was reportedly in peak shape for another pending fight. It certainly looked like it. Nakash channeled Dwight Qawi as he launched heavy bombs that rattled Huck in the early rounds.

**TOUGH SUB**
Huck uppercuts Nakash during entertaining struggle

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

# Takalani Ndlovu W 12 Steve Molitor

Before a nationalistic, vuvuzela-blowing crowd at Johannesburg's Nasrec Indoor Arena, South Africa's Ndlovu lifted the IBF junior featherweight belt from defending titlist Molitor via wide unanimous decision.

Molitor, who was making the second defense of his second reign, owned two previous victories against Ndlovu, both of which were for the IBF trinket. The common threads between Molitor's ninth-round kayo in July 2007 and the unanimous decision in March 2010 that began the Canadian's second reign were twofold. First, both fights took place at Casino Rama in Rama, Ontario, where Molitor had fought 10 consecutive times starting with the first Ndlovu fight and ending with the rematch. Second, Molitor used his springy legs, sharp counters, southpaw stance, and aggressiveness to dictate the action and prevent Ndlovu from generating any momentum.

The third fight couldn't have been more different. Thanks to a winning bid by promoter Branko Milenkovic, the home-ring advantage shifted to Ndlovu, who decisioned countryman Jeffrey Mathebula by split decision last September to earn another shot at Molitor. Also, Ndlovu took full advantage of Molitor's slow start-

## MATCH STATS

| | Takalani Ndlovu | Steve Molitor |
|---|---|---|
| **Division:** Junior Featherweight | **Age:** 33 • **Weight:** 121½ | **Age:** 30 • **Weight:** 121 |
| **Location:** Johannesburg, South Africa | **Residence:** Johannesburg, South Africa | **Residence:** Mississauga, Canada |
| **Date:** March 26, 2011 | **Birthplace:** Soweto, South Africa | **Birthplace:** Sarnia, Canada |
| **Promoters:** Branco Sports Productions | **Record:** 32-6 (18) | **Record:** 33-2 (12) |
| **Referee:** Wally Snowball (South Africa) | **Ring Ranking:** 5 | **Ring Ranking:** 8 |

# MATCH STATS

**Division:** Cruiserweight • **Location:** Halle, Germany
**Date:** April 2, 2011 • **Promoter:** Sauerland Event
**Referee:** Joe Cortez (USA)

| Marco Huck | Ran Nakash |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 26 • **Weight:** 198½ | **Age:** 32 |
| **Residence:** Bielefeld, Germany | **Weight:** 199¾ |
| **Birthplace:** Ugao, Serbia | **Residence:** Haifa, Israel |
| **Record:** 32-1 (23) | **Birthplace:** Haifa, Israel |
| **RING Ranking:** 2 | **Record:** 25-1 (18) |

Huck's face reddened a bit, but nothing like that of trainer Ulli Wegner, who screamed at Huck to cover up. Huck responded with stinging uppercuts and showed he too could brawl on the inside. Nakash kept moving forward and scoring. The crowd of roughly 5,000 got behind Huck more vocally at the halfway point, and it seemed to inspire the Armenian transplant. Huck landed big hooks from waist height while Nakash kept his hands up defensively and backed off as Huck surged ahead.

Huck rocked Nakash around the ring until Nakash's left eye swelled and he faded into a slower gear. Both fighters were tired and sloppy by the 10th round when Huck stunned Nakash a couple times. Nakash kept moving forward, however.

Huck got on his toes and clowned a bit down the stretch but finished with multiple scoring flurries. The final decision wasn't in any doubt. Mikael Hook (Sweden) had it 116-112 while Robert Hoyle (USA) and Roark Young (USA) each scored it 118-110.

"I don't care about a late change in opponents," the well-conditioned Huck said. "Whoever it is, my job is to get the man out."

Against Nakash, Huck returned to familiar, friendly territory where he won both his first major belt and suffered his only defeat, to Steve Cunningham. If the unification tournament is realized, a blockbuster rematch between those rivals could occur within the year.

***Phil Woolever***

ing habits by beating the Canadian to the punch, hurting him with bodyshots in the second and sixth rounds, and keeping him pinned against the ropes.

Sensing Ndlovu was on the cusp of fulfilling a dream, the crowd further lifted his spirits by singing the traditional miner's song "Shosholoza," considered by locals as the second national anthem. In response, Ndlovu kept up the pressure and won the fight going away. Judges Valerie Dorsett (USA) and Alfred Buqwana (South Africa) scored the bout 118-110 while Alan Davis (Canada) saw it 116-112, all for Ndlovu.

"It was a must-win fight for me, and I had to give it my all because this was my last opportunity to win this title," Ndlovu told Kulani Nkuna of *The New Age*. "Fighting away from home puts the visiting fighter at a disadvantage because of the conditions and home crowds.

"But I thought Molitor handled himself well because when the crowd started singing 'Shosholoza' I got a big lift, which made me want to fight harder. That song is like our national anthem; it reminded me of where we came from and the struggle of our past."

# Dmitry Pirog W 12 Javier Maciel

Providing no comfort to fans of Danny Jacobs, undefeated Russian Pirog followed up his spectacular knockout of the Brooklyn prospect with a performance that was quite the opposite of spectacular. Maybe there was a bit of ring rust after an illogical eight-month layoff, or maybe the style of his obscure Argentine opponent Maciel had something to do with it. Pirog slogged through 12 dull rounds en route to capturing a unanimous decision in front of a disappointed partisan crowd at DIVS (Divorets Igrovych Vidov Sporta).

Pirog had come into the Jacobs fight as an unknown underdog, but he surprised American audiences by delivering a fifth-round kayo with a sizzling right hand. Maciel came into this bout as the unknown underdog, and, though he didn't pull the upset, he did manage a surprise by hanging tough for all 12 rounds. Pirog had commented prior to the fight that he believed Maciel to be awkward, and, indeed, the Argentine moved well and kept a high guard. After Pirog clearly won the opener, the next two rounds were close. Pirog realized Maciel's head was a tough target to find so he carried the next couple of rounds with bodywork. Through six rounds, the action was slow and uninspired, but Pirog was winning comfortably.

The fight shifted in the seventh when Maciel started cranking up his offense, particularly over the second half of the round. And for the first time, an upset started to feel like a possibility in the eighth thanks to Maciel landing a pair of hard right hands that first made the Russian retreat to the ropes and then clinch to get through the trouble spot. "La Bestia" also landed a left hook late in the round, and Pirog returned to his corner with his perfect record seemingly in jeopardy.

To his credit, Pirog responded to the adversity well, asserting himself with power shots in the ninth and controlling the fight the rest of the way. He never appeared to hurt Maciel, but he was clearly racking up points (even though ref Benji Esteves took one away in the 10th for Pirog repeatedly shoving Maciel with his shoulder). Pirog closed strongly, taking the last two rounds convincingly to secure the decision.

Judge Bernd Hupfer (Germany) scored it 117-111, Noel Monnet (France) saw it 115-111, and Fernando Laguna (Spain) had it 115-112, all for Pirog. THE RING had the Russian on top by a score of 116-111.

For Maciel, a seven-fight winning streak against absolutely nobody you've heard of, came to an end. For Pirog, his winning streak continued, but any talk of him as a potential challenger to RING middleweight champion Sergio Martinez died down for the time being. Pirog will need a win that more closely resembles what he did to Jacobs in order to make a Martinez fight remotely attractive.

# MATCH STATS

**Division:** Middleweight • **Location:** Ekaterinburg, Russia
**Date:** March 26, 2011 • **Television:** ESPN3.com
**Promoters:** German Titov Boxing Promotion, Banner Promotions • **Referee:** Benji Esteves (USA)

| Dmitry Pirog | Javier Maciel |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 30 • **Weight:** 159½ | **Age:** 26 |
| **Residence:** Gelendzhik, Russia | **Weight:** 156¾ |
| **Birthplace:** Temryuk, Russia | **Residence:** Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| **Record:** 18-0 (14) | **Birthplace:** Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| **RING Ranking:** 7 | **Record:** 18-2 (12) |

# Chris John W 12 Daud Yordan

Since Yordan arrived in the public consciousness some time ago, he has seemingly been on a collision course with fellow Indonesian John.

Yordan had fought on HBO twice—a two-round no-decision against Robert Guerrero and then an absolute beating at the hands of Celestino Caballero. And while he didn't win either fight, he put himself firmly on the radar for a bout with the undefeated John, who has now been in THE RING rankings for more than 350 weeks at featherweight.

John, of course, is best known for his victory against Juan Manuel Marquez in 2006. Since then, he has struggled to find a fight that would stoke the Indonesian public's interest—until now.

John and Yordan signed to meet at the Jakarta International Expo in perhaps the biggest fight in the archipelago nation's history. But it didn't turn out to be a changing of the guard, as John retained his featherweight belt over 12 competitive rounds, cementing his status as Indonesia's preeminent athlete.

John started out the aggressor, establishing his jab and looking to time Yordan with counterpunches.

Over the next two rounds, Yordan took the fight to John, getting the better of exchanges on the inside and appearing to confuse the titlist. Yordan displayed his punching power, pummeling John to the ropes over the second and third rounds.

But from round four on, it was all John as he put his efficient counterpunching to use, outboxing his foe round after round.

When Yordan would stalk John, the elder statesman of Indonesian boxing would turn his aggression against him, using crisp technique and timing to offset the youngster.

And when "Cino" Yordan would rest, John would take it to him, willing to mix it up inside.

In the end, "The Dragon" wasn't ready to pass the torch just yet, especially not to Yordan, who still has much to learn and improve upon.

Judges Francisco Martinez (New Zealand) and Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) scored it 116-112 while Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand) had it 117-111.

John, who is regarded as an aesthetically unpleasing fighter, put on a crowd-pleasing performance in front of his passionate fans while maintaining his foothold in the talent-rich featherweight division. It was his 14th successful defense of the WBA trinket.

There was talk of THE RING's top-ranked feather, Yuriorkis Gamboa, meeting John in the summer to fulfill the vacancy at 126.

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Featherweight
**Location:** Jakarta, Indonesia • **Date:** April 17, 2011
**Promoters:** Main Events, Ziggy Promotions
**Referee:** Raul Caiz Sr. (USA)

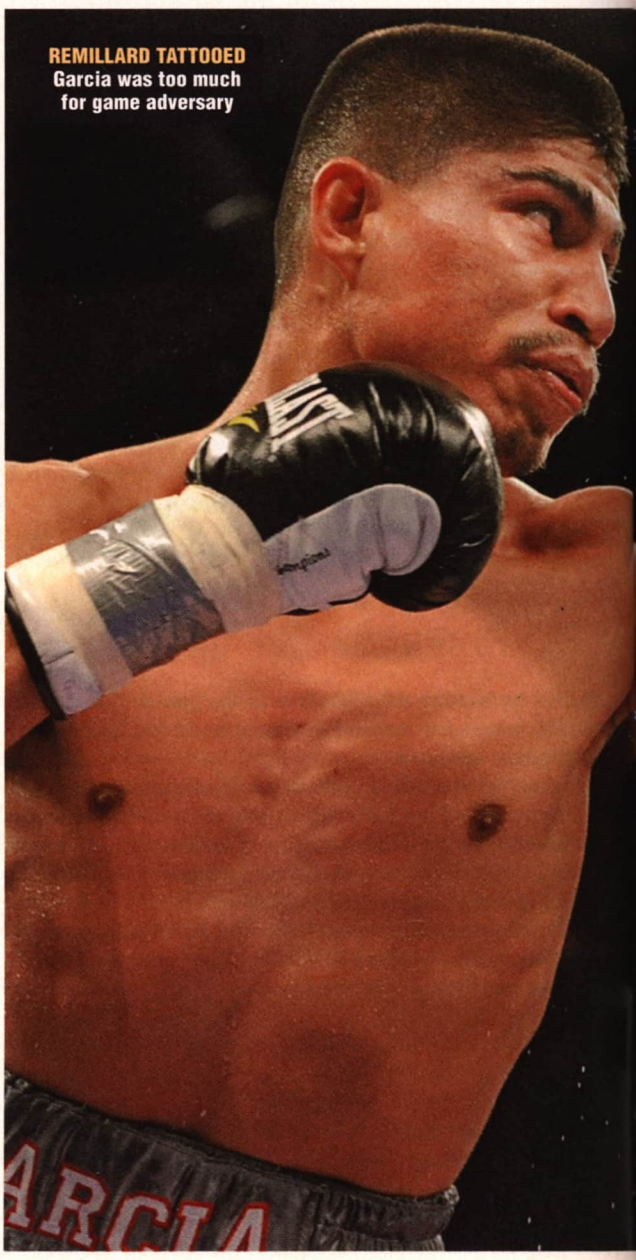
| Chris John | Daud Yordan |
|---|---|
| **Age:** 31 • **Weight:** 125¾ | **Age:** 23 |
| **Residence:** Semarang, Indonesia | **Weight:** 126 |
| **Birthplace:** Jakarta, Indonesia | **Residence:** Ketapang, Indonesia |
| **Record:** 45-0-2 (22) | **Birthplace:** Ketapang, Indonesia |
| **RING Ranking:** 2 | **Record:** 27-2 (21) |

## FEATHERWEIGHT FURY

**Location:** Atlantic City, NJ • **Date:** March 26, 2011
**Television:** HBO • **Promoter:** Top Rank

# Miguel Garcia KO 10 Matt Remillard

Looking at their records going in, one could be excused for thinking the scheduled 12-rounder between the undefeated duo of Garcia and Remillard would be a competitive fight. But not all undefeated records are created equal, and, even though it lasted until the end of the 10th round, Remillard never appeared to have a realistic chance of winning. It was a simple



**REMILLARD TATTOOED**
Garcia was too much for game adversary

case of fighter on the cusp of a world ranking overwhelming a good club fighter.

Actually, a slice of pizza that Garcia purchased and ate on the boardwalk a few hours before the fight caused more distress than anything Remillard did.

"His stomach was bothering him," said Garcia's brother/trainer, Robert. "He wasn't so sure he wanted to continue in the second round. I told Mikey he has to fight, even if he doesn't feel like it. It's a big fight on HBO, and there is no way you can stop because your stomach hurts."

Most of the near-capacity crowd of 2,913 at Adrian Phillips Ballroom inside Boardwalk Hall had no idea that Garcia had tummy trouble. As is his wont, he started slowly, controlled the distance, and landed just enough punches to win most of the rounds. He scored frequently with his jab and every now and then unleashed a quick flurry. Remillard earnestly tried to work his way in close and land something significant, but he could never really accomplish much.

The gradual punishment he'd absorbed caught up to Remillard in the eighth round when Garcia increased his punch rate and had "The Sharpshooter" hanging on at the bell. The ninth round was even worse. Remillard went down under an early barrage and was floored again by a wicked left hook near round's end that pretty much sealed the deal.

Remillard would have been better served staying on his stool when the bell rang to start the 10th, but he gamely trudged out to meet his fate. Garcia battered him along the ropes for most of the round and then put him down a third time with a right hand to the head shortly before the bell.

The bout was stopped soon after a completely spent Remillard returned to his corner and went into the record book as a TKO victory for Garcia at the end of the 10th.

Older brother Robert briefly held the IBF junior lightweight strap in the late 1990s, but "Mikey" could very well turn out to be the best fighter in the family. He is, however, competing in a talent-packed division and will have to get past some tough and talented hombres to claw his way to the top. From here on, he'd better save the pizza until after the fight.

***Nigel Collins***

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

## MATCH STATS

| | Miguel Garcia | Matt Remillard |
|---|---|---|
| **Division:** Featherweight | **Age:** 23 • **Weight:** 125 | **Age:** 24 • **Weight:** 125 |
| **Referee:** Ricardo Vera (USA) | **Residence:** Oxnard, CA | **Residence:** Manchester, CT |
| | **Birthplace:** Oxnard, CA | **Birthplace:** Hartford, CT |
| | **Record:** 25-0 (21) | **Record:** 23-1 (13) |

# Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 4 Jorge Solis

There's no better opponent for a budding star with fragile chin than a guy like Solis, a veteran with a solid record but little punching power. Solis, best known for his knockout loss to Manny Pacquiao in 2007, had won seven of his eight post-Pacquiao bouts going in, but he simply didn't have the tools to cope with Gamboa, currently THE RING's first-ranked featherweight.

Solis held his own in the rather uneventful first round as he made the Cuban miss with several shots while landing a few taps of his own—then Gamboa got serious.

Gamboa, who boxed at mid-range and made good use of his superior hand and foot speed, scored two knockdowns in the second. The first came compliments of a flush left hook that sent the Mexican plummeting to the floor. Solis jumped up quickly, apparently unhurt, only to be sent down again later in the round when Gamboa landed a right behind the head.

The totally outgunned Solis was sent crashing to the canvas again in the third round from another potent left hook. He beat the count but was lucky the bell rang before Gamboa could throw another punch. Nonetheless, it had become abundantly clear that Solis was no match for his gifted adversary.

A crisp right hand floored Solis early in the fourth, and another right, which again landed behind the head of its ducking victim, sent him crumbling to the deck a fifth and final time. The referee immediately waved the fight over at the 1:31 mark of the round, by which time Solis' wife was yelling "Enough! Enough!" from her ringside seat as their young daughter sobbed "Papa, Papa."

Solis confirmed his family's worries when he was asked what it's like to be in the ring with Gamboa.

"It's terrible," he replied.

Gamboa's exhilarating performance further stimulated interest in a showdown with Juan Manuel Lopez, who entered the ring immediately after the fight was stopped to challenge Gamboa and exchange some friendly banter.

"Top Rank is going to put that fight very far away and keep it at a distance because they know he doesn't have what is necessary to beat me," Gamboa said at the time.

Lopez sounded just as eager as Gamboa to get it on: "We're the two best in the division," said Lopez. "We have to fight."

Three weeks later, however, Lopez was knocked out by Orlando Salido in the eighth round of a bout Lopez was supposed to dominate. In the process, Salido ruined promoter Bob Arum's plan of delaying a Gamboa-Lopez match in the expressed hope that the longer it simmered, the more fans would

**CUBAN MISSILE**
**Gamboa connects with crushing left hook to Solis' face**

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Featherweight
**Referee:** David Fields (USA)

**Yuriorkus Gamboa**
**Age:** 29 • **Weight:** 126
**Residence:** Miami, FL
**Birthplace:** Guantanamo, Cuba
**Record:** 20-0 (16)
**Ring Ranking:** 1

**Jorge Solis**
**Age:** 31 • **Weight:** 125½
**Residence:** Guadalajara, Mexico
**Birthplace:** Guadalajara, Mexico
**Record:** 40-3-1 (29)
and 1 no-contest

want to buy it when it came to a boil. In the end, that strategy blew up in Arum's face.

*Nigel Collins*

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

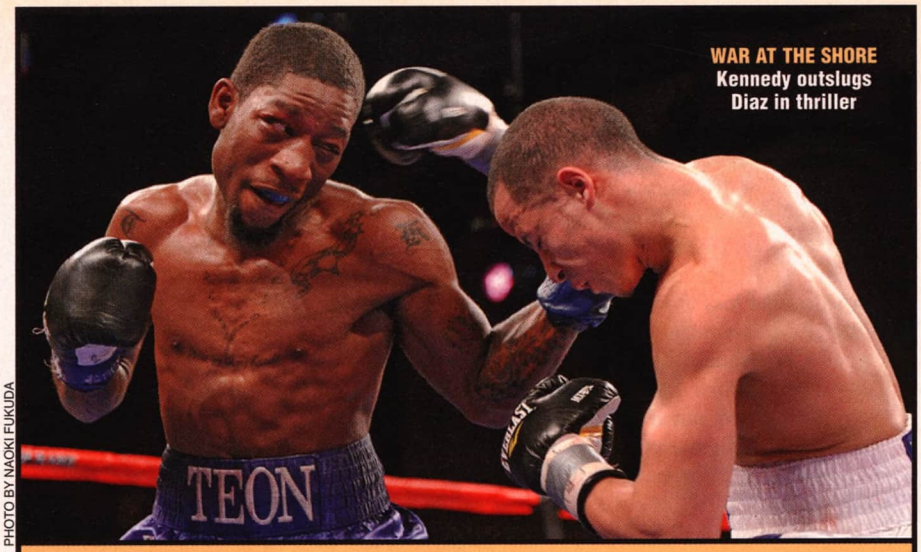



PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

**WAR AT THE SHORE**
**Kennedy outslugs Diaz in thriller**

# Teon Kennedy W 12 Jorge Diaz

Although Top Rank christened the card "Featherweight Fury," it was junior featherweights Kennedy and Diaz who stole the show away from the televised portion of the bill. The pair of previously undefeated prospects staged a suspenseful, give-and-take battle of will and skills that resulted in a 12-round unanimous decision in Kennedy's favor.

Diaz applied plenty of pressure during the first two rounds and outworked Kennedy, who did manage to land a pretty right uppercut in the second but didn't seem to have the punching power to keep Diaz at bay. That perception, however, quickly changed in the third when, in the middle of a heated exchange, Kennedy dropped Diaz with a left hook to the forehead.

Diaz popped back up immediately, apparently unhurt, and fought back so effectively that judge Alan Rubenstein and The Ring gave the Philadelphian just a one-point advantage despite the knockdown.

Early signs of fatigue began to show in the fourth, as Diaz' attack lost some of its steam, while Kennedy, despite the punches he'd absorbed, still looked fresh. Even so, the fifth turned out to be extremely close. Both men landed often, but Kennedy, whose punches were of better quality, won the round on two of the three judges' scorecards.

In the sixth, Kennedy drilled Diaz with a right hand to the chin that sent the recipient corkscrewing to his knees. This time, Diaz was clearly hurt, but he beat the count again and survived Kennedy's follow-up assault on decidedly rubbery legs.

Kennedy banged hard to the body early in the seventh, but the ever-game Diaz withstood the bombardment and rallied late with a series of headshots to edge the session on The Ring's card. Kennedy regained control in the eighth behind his jab and never relinquished it.

Referee Steve Smoger deducted a point from Diaz in the ninth, allegedly for punching low. Although the ref had previously warned Diaz, the blow that preceded the penalty landed on the waistband of Kennedy's trunks and did not appear to be a foul.

Diaz mounted one final rally toward the end of the 10th round in an attempt to salvage the fight, but he had little left in the 11th and 12th and spent most the final two rounds clinching in order to last the distance.

Kennedy, who suffered cuts over both eyes, swept the last three rounds on all three official scorecards by tallies of 117-109 (John Poturaj), 118-109 (Alan Rubenstein), and 115-111 (Steve Weisfeld).

***Nigel Collins***

## MATCH STATS

**Division:** Junior Featherweight • **Referee:** Steve Smoger (New Jersey)

**Teon Kennedy**
**Age:** 24 • **Weight:** 122
**Residence:** Philadelphia, PA
**Birthplace:** Philadelphia, PA
**Record:** 17-0-1 (7)

**Jorge Diaz**
**Age:** 23 • **Weight:** 122
**Residence:** New Brunswick, NJ
**Birthplace:** New Brunswick, NJ
**Record:** 15-1 (9)

# Marco Antonio Rubio KO 7 David Lemieux

Punching dynamo Lemieux was so heavily favored that it seemed to be forgotten that Rubio was a hardened veteran of 55 bouts with only five losses, including a failed effort against then-middleweight champ Kelly Pavlik in 2009.

To his credit, Rubio may be an improved fighter since that loss to Pavlik, and it was an educated defense rather than an economical offense that should be credited for his upset victory against Lemieux before a crowd of 4,650 at Montreal's Bell Centre.

The unbeaten Lemieux attacked with focused aggression throughout the first three rounds, attacking from behind a blistering jab that set up a ripping body attack. In response, Rubio's defensive shell seemed a matter of survival rather than strategy. He threw the right hand sparingly to the head, although a stinging jab landed consistently, along with several left hooks that seemed to shock Lemieux and stop him cold whenever they were thrown.

But while Rubio was able to read those punches fired to the head, Lemieux's body work seemed to be wilting him by round five, and yet another knockout for the hometown favorite seemed an inevitability.

It was a right hand early in round six that rattled Lemieux and finally turned the momentum in Rubio's favor. Lemieux immediately began to backpedal, and, each time he set to throw punches, Rubio began to respond with counters that continued to shake Lemieux's confidence. Rubio was in full-attack mode by the round-ending bell, blasting Lemieux with both hands and leaving him bloodied at the nose and looking beaten as he slumped onto his stool in the corner.

Lemieux remained busy in round seven as he fought to sway the bout back in his favor, but a more active Rubio looked to be the dominant fighter as he controlled the exchanges. Two minutes in, Rubio landed a perfectly timed overhand right that landed high and behind the ear, buckling Lemieux's knees and sending him collapsing backwards into the corner turnbuckle pad. Referee Michael Griffin immediately stepped in to toll an eight count although Lemieux was essentially finished by the punch.

**CANADIAN CRUMBLES**
Rubio sends Lemieux down and out

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

A poised Rubio continued to apply pressure, choosing his punches and landing with precision, as Lemieux reeled around the ring. Thirty seconds later, Lemieux trainer Russ Anber marched up to the ring apron waving a hand in surrender, prompting Griffin to end the bout at the 2:36 mark. It was a commendable call by the cornerman.

And so it's back to the proving grounds for the young Lemieux, who has some work to do before he can claim to be a viable contender at 160 pounds. Meanwhile, Rubio returns to contender status and is now poised to face the winner of the June 4 bout between Sebastian Zbik-Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

***Paul Salgado***

## MATCH STATS

| | Marco Antonio Rubio | David Lemieux |
|---|---|---|
| **Division:** Middleweight | **Age:** 30 • **Weight:** 159¼ | **Age:** 22 |
| **Location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada | **Residence:** Torreon, Mexico | **Weight:** 159 |
| **Date:** April 8, 2011 | **Birthplace:** Gomez Palacio, Mexico | **Residence:** Laval, Quebec |
| **Television:** ESPN2 | **Record:** 50-5-1 (43) | **Birthplace:** Montreal, Quebec |
| **Promoter:** Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM) | **Ring Ranking:** 10 | **Record:** 25-1 (24) |
| **Referee:** Michael Griffin (Canada) | | |

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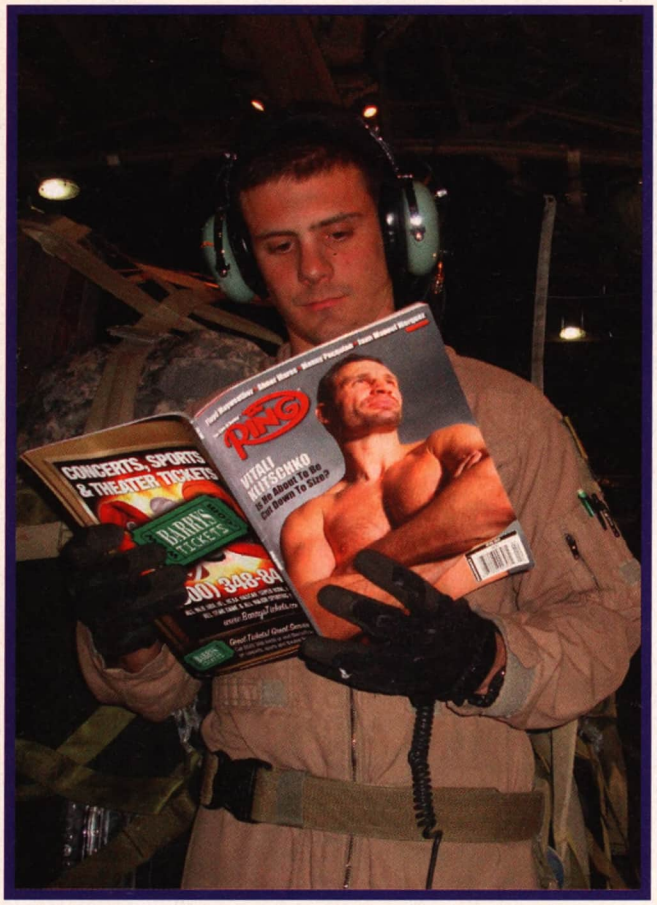

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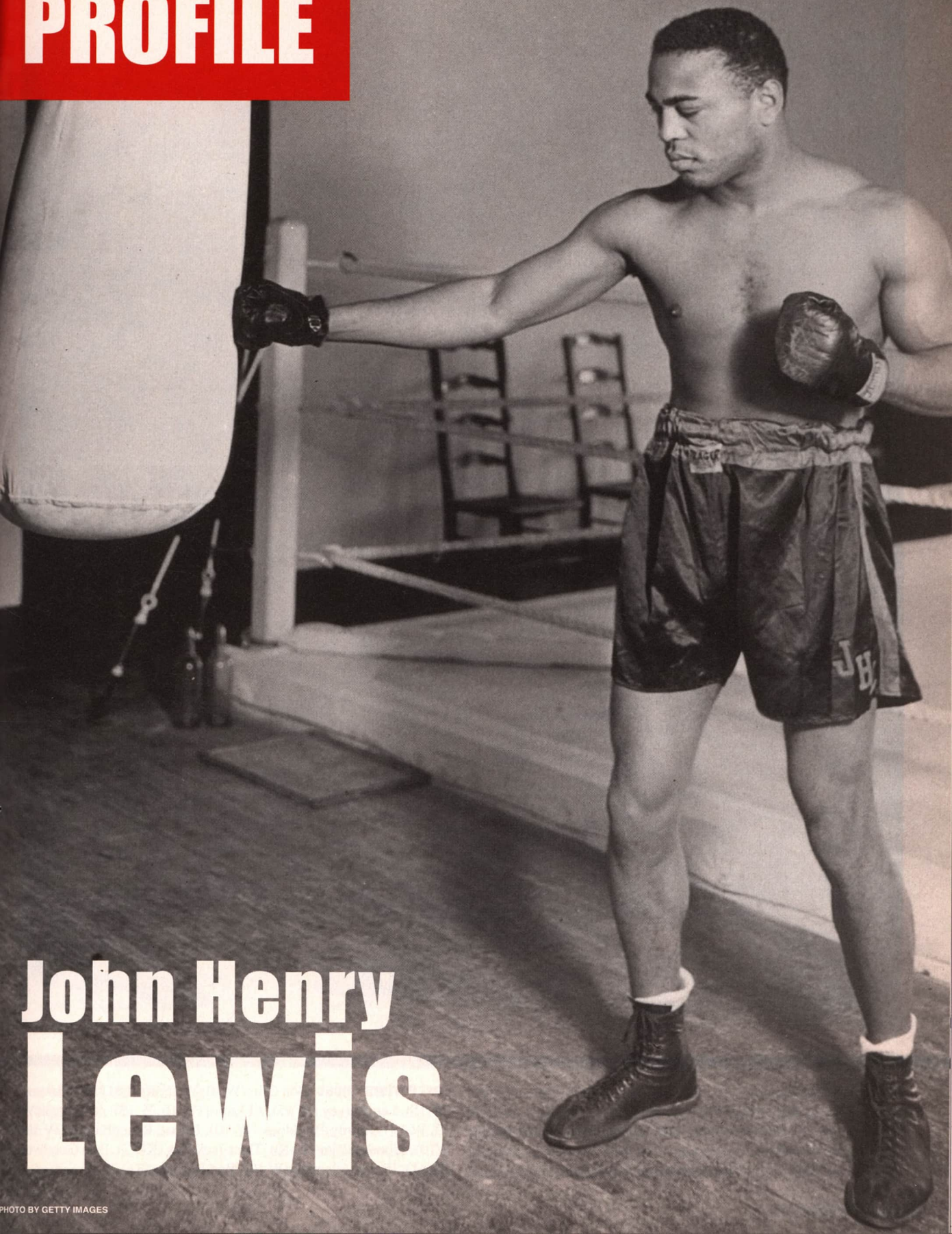

# John Henry Lewis

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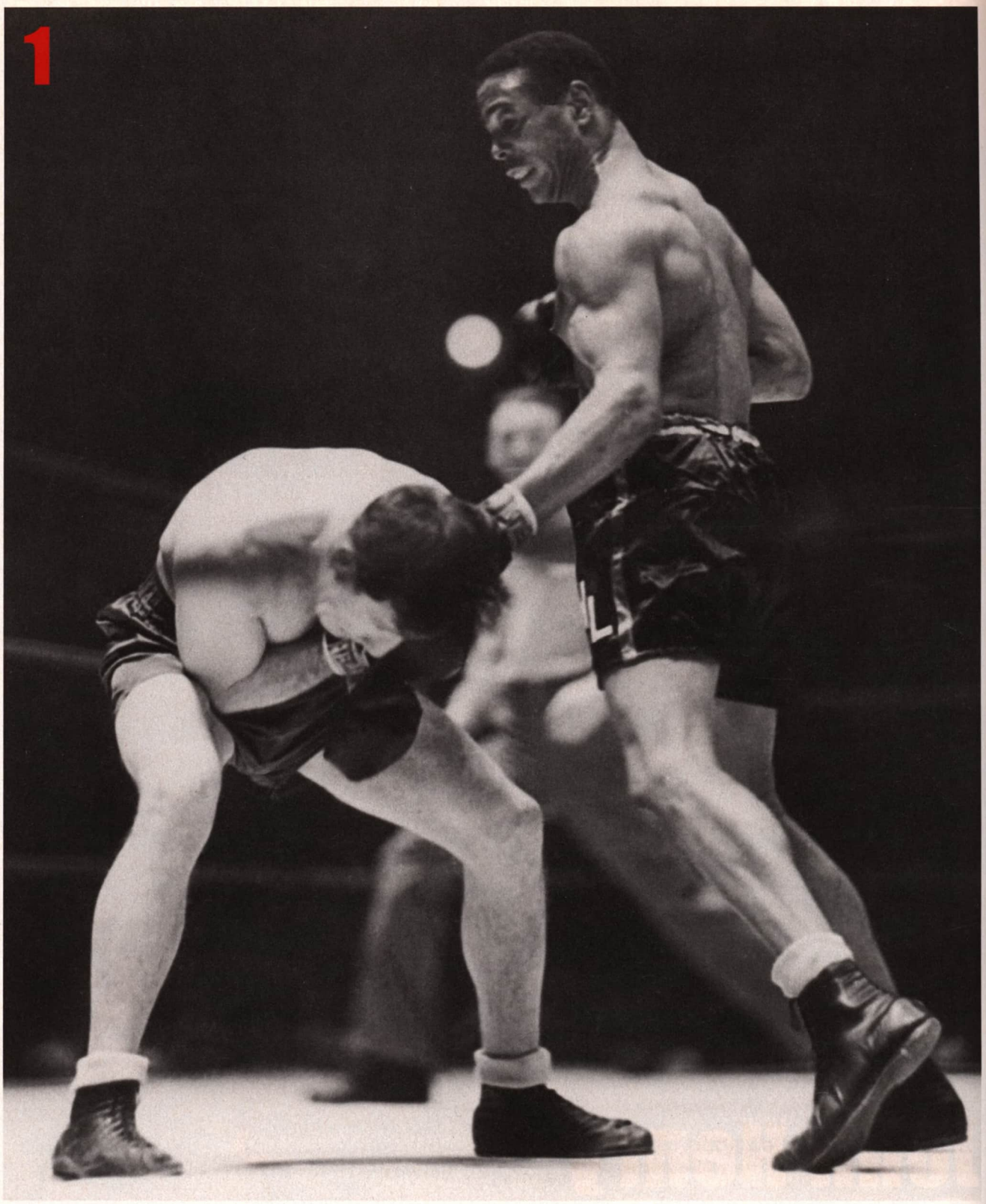


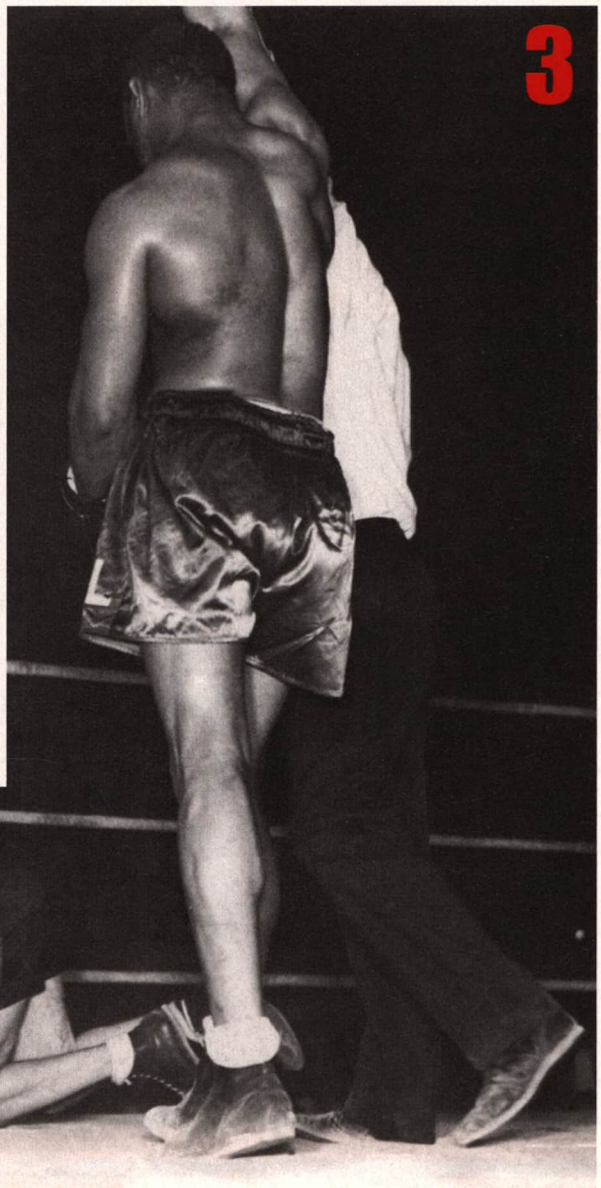

**Birthdate:** May 1, 1914
**Date of Death:** April 18, 1974
**Weight Classes:** Middleweight, light heavyweight, heavyweight
**Record:** 98-10-4 (58)
**Title Held:** World Light Heavyweight

**Best Performances:** Bob Olin (W 10, W 15, KO 8), Jock McAvoy (W 15), Len Harvey (W 15), Al Ettore (W 15, W 15), Al Gainer (W 12, W 15), Jimmy Braddock (W 10), Maxie Rosenbloom (W 10, W10), Johnny Risko (W 10), Tiger Jack Fox (KO 3), Bob Goodwin (KO 1), Jimmy Adamick (W 10), Red Burman (KO 2)

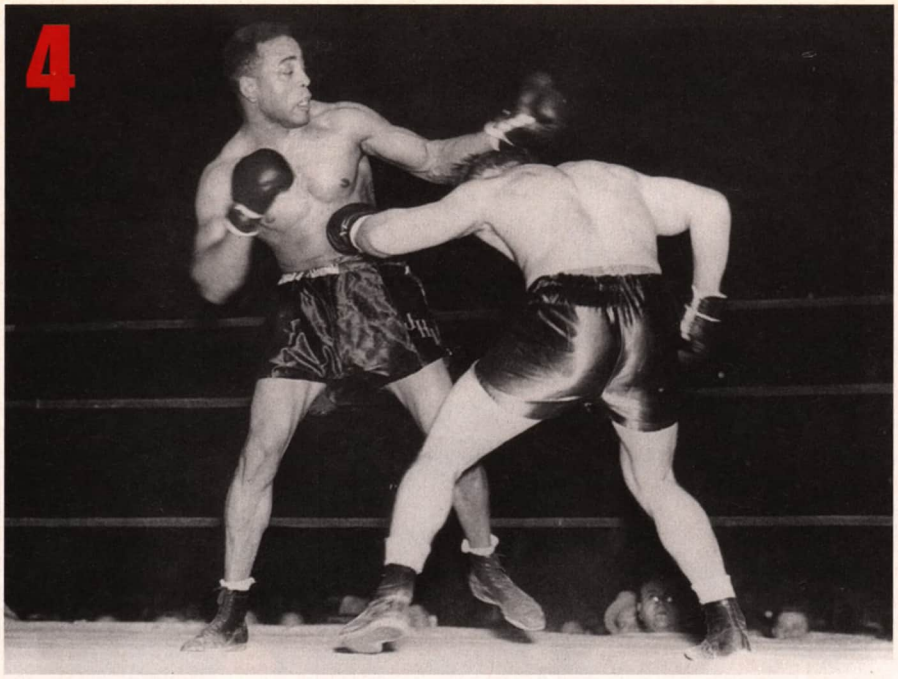
**1. FIRST DEFENSE**
Lewis aims a left at crouching Jock McAvoy, who he decisioned over 15 lively rounds at Madison Square Garden in front of approximately 15,000 fans. It was Lewis' maiden defense of the light heavyweight championship he had won the previous year.

**2. TRIUMPHANT RETURN**
Lewis steps off the plane after flying back to the US following his 1936 title-defense victory over Len Harvey in London, England.

**3. BOB BASHED**
Former champ Bob Olin goes down and out in the eighth round of a bid to regain the title from Lewis in June 1937.



**Year of IBHOF Induction:** 1994
**Background:** The great-great nephew of famous bare-knuckle heavyweight Tom Molineaux started training at his father's gym in Phoenix, Arizona, at a young age … Toured the Southwest while still a boy, boxing exhibitions with his brother, Christy … Turned pro at the age of 14 … When he was 16, he fought Sam Terrin in Prescott, Arizona, who died after being knocked out in the third round … Lewis was taken into custody, but he was cleared the next day when an autopsy revealed Terrin had a heart condition … Beat future heavyweight champion Jimmy Braddock via 10-round decision in

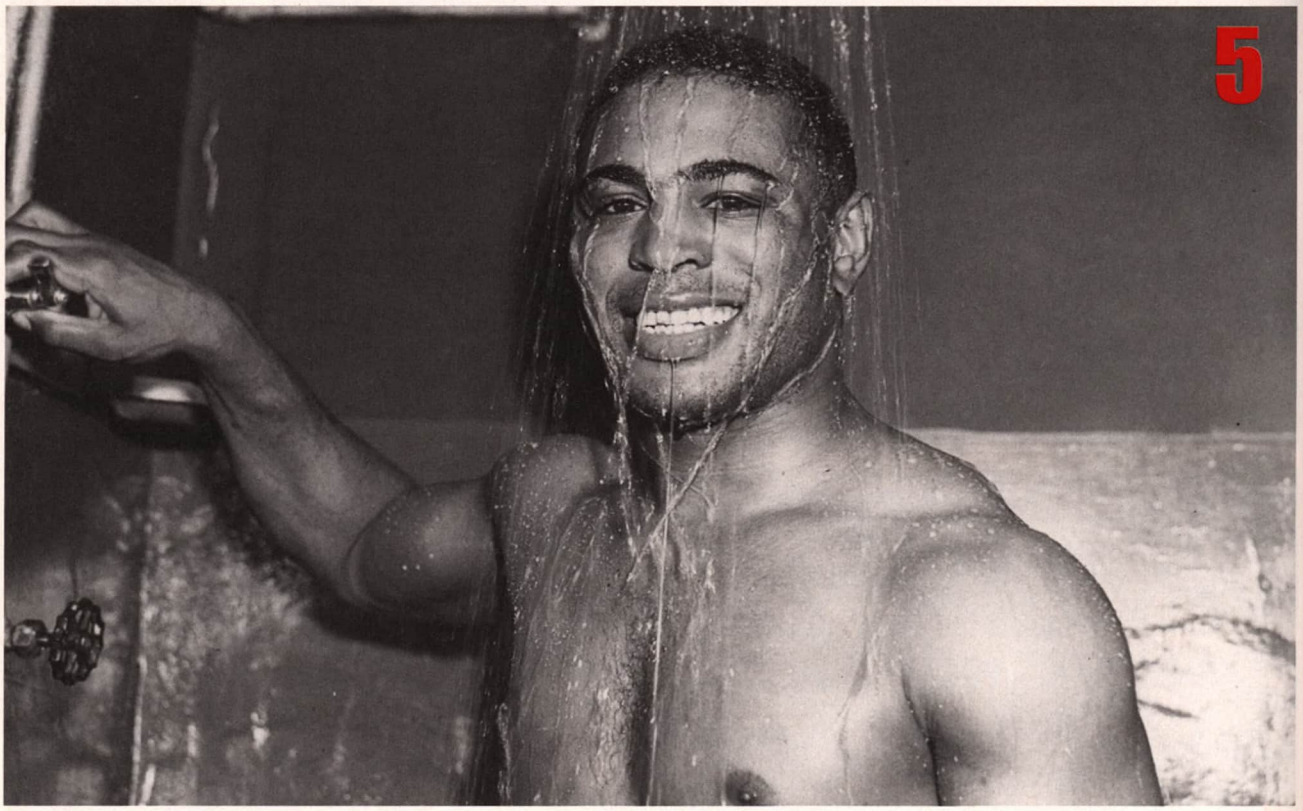


**4. BUSY SCHEDULE**
Less than two weeks after knocking out Olin, Lewis fought heavyweight contender Al Ettore at Baker Bowl in Philadelphia. Ettore had outpointed Lewis in January of '37, but Lewis won the rematch via 15-round unanimous decision.

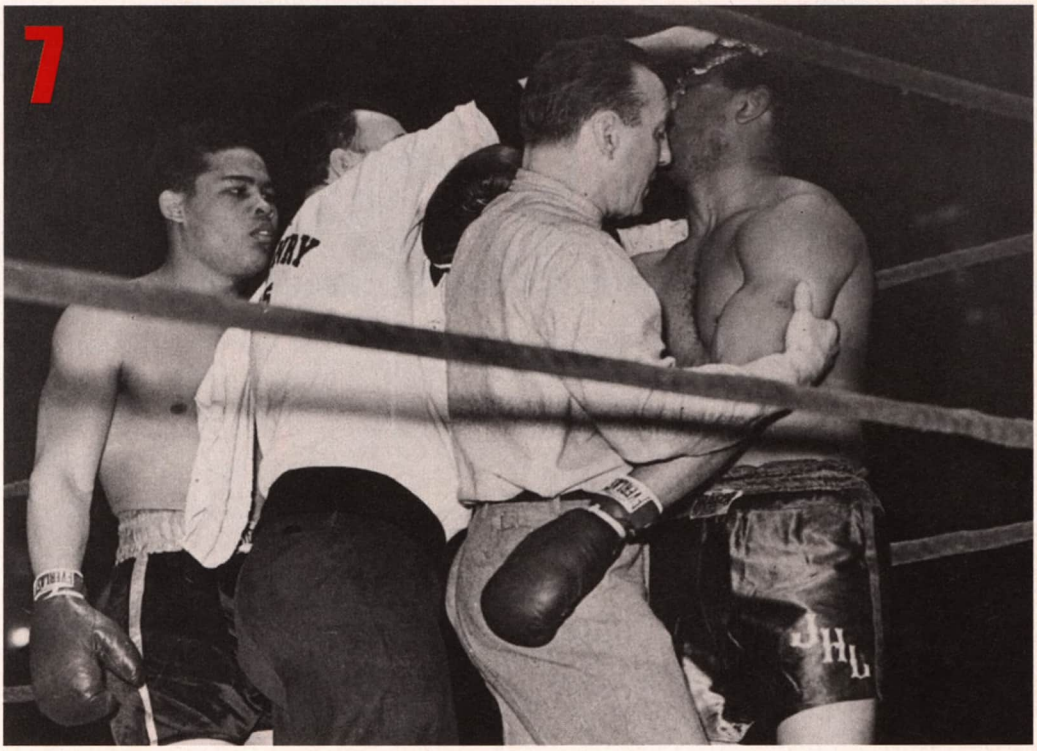
**5. CLEAN FIGHTER**
A publicity shot of Lewis taking a shower.

**6. TWO CHAMPS**
Heavyweight champion Joe Louis and light heavyweight king Lewis compare fists for the cameras during the build-up to their January 1939 title fight at Madison Square Garden.

**7. SORRY, PAL**
A concerned-looking Louis comes to Lewis' corner to see how he's doing after scoring a first-round kayo of his buddy. Louis knew of the challenger's eye problem and wanted his friend to have a nice payday, but he didn't want to submit him to a prolonged beating.



September '32 … Lost the first of a five-fight series with reigning light heavyweight champion Maxie Rosenbloom in a November '32 non-title fight … Won back-to-back 10-round decisions over Rosenbloom in June '33 in a pair of non-title fights … Lost rematch to Braddock in '34 … Captured world light heavyweight championship via unanimous 15-round decision over Bob Olin on October 31, 1935, in St. Louis, Missouri, to become the first African-American to win the 175-pound title … This is how RING editor Nat Fleischer described Lewis following his defeat of Olin: "Lewis is a clever boxer and a hard puncher. He uses his right hand well, shoots it out straight as a rifle shot, and seldom employs a swing or a hook. He has the power and speed and the punch and should make a good champion" … He was a good champion and never lost the title in the ring, but he was forced to compete in numerous non-title fights, including



many against heavyweights, in order to make a living … Fought 20 times in both '36 and '37, going 18-1-1 and 18-2, respectively … Successful defense against Len Harvey in London, England, in January '36 was a career highlight … Fifth and final title defense was a 15-round unanimous decision over Al Gainer in September '38 … Unknown to most at the time was the fact that Lewis was blind in his left eye, a problem that had begun in a 1935 bout with Abe Freeman and gradually worsened … In an effort to give him a decent payday, friend Joe Louis gave Lewis a shot at the heavyweight title on January 25, 1939 … There were fears in some quarters that Louis would carry his buddy, but, instead, "The Brown Bomber" ended matters with merciful brevity, knocking him out at 2:29 of the first round … Unable to pass a physical due to his eye, Lewis never fought again and officially retired in June of the same year. ■

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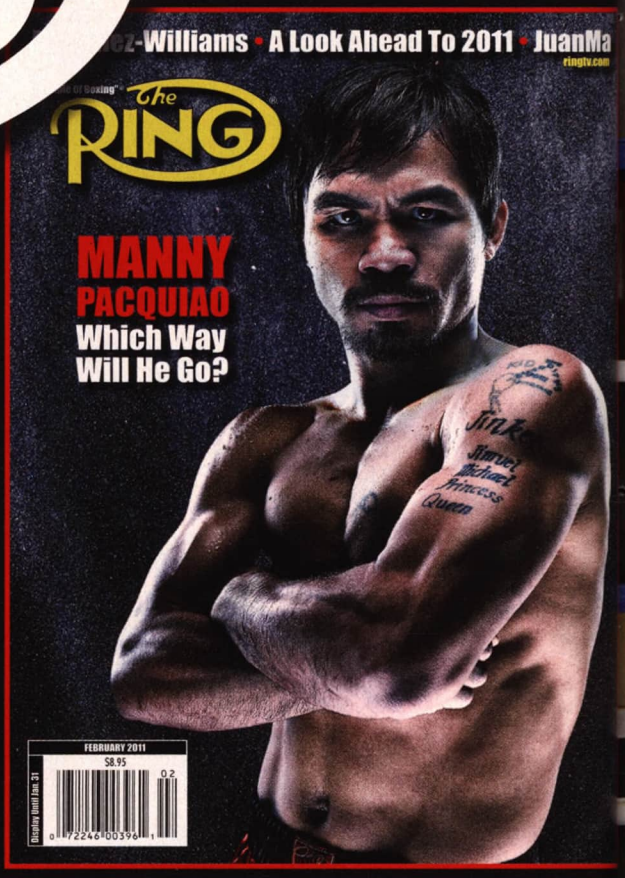


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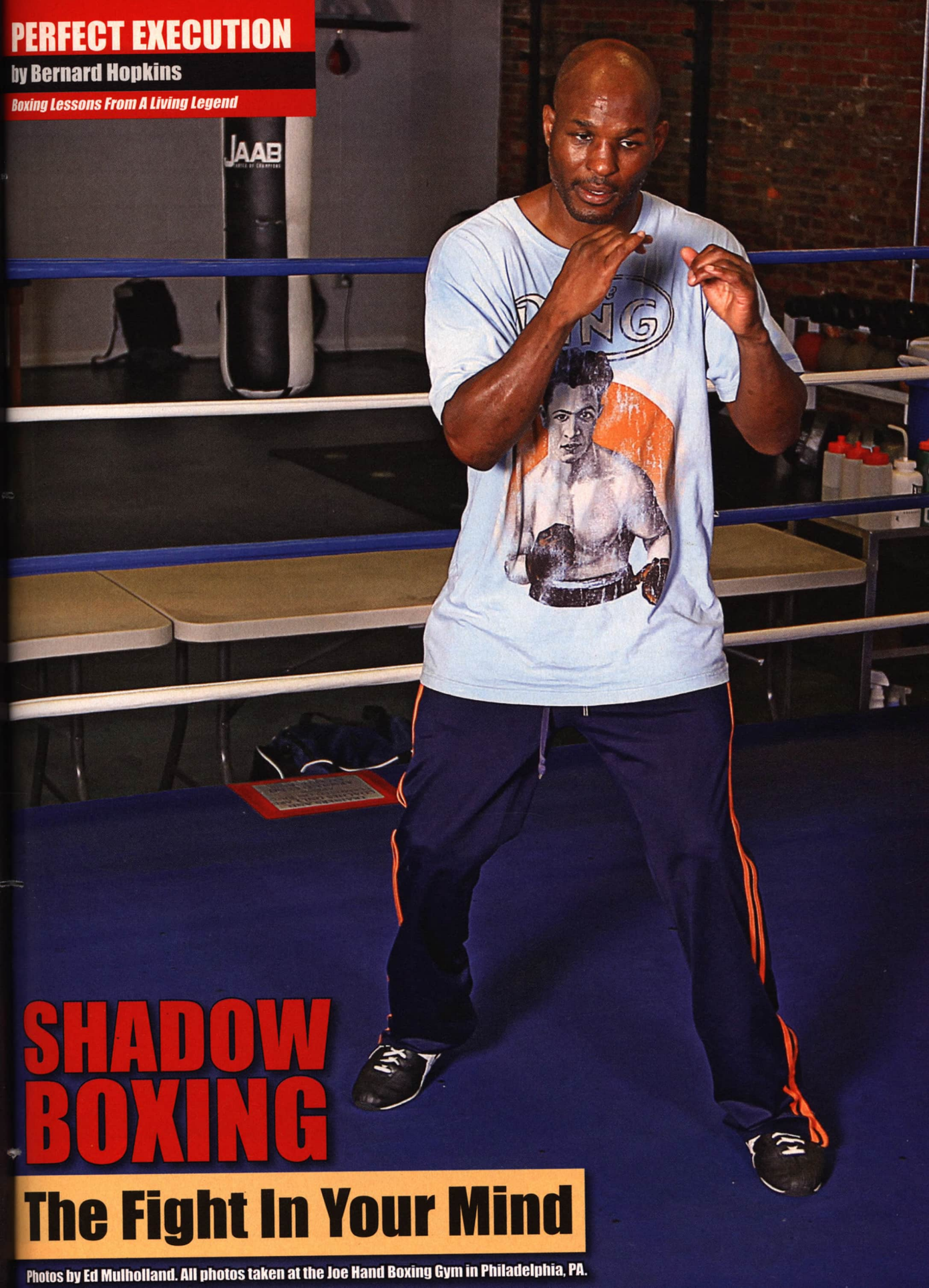
**PERFECT EXECUTION**

**by Bernard Hopkins**

***Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend***




# SHADOW BOXING

## The Fight In Your Mind

Photos by Ed Mulholland. All photos taken at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym in Philadelphia, PA.

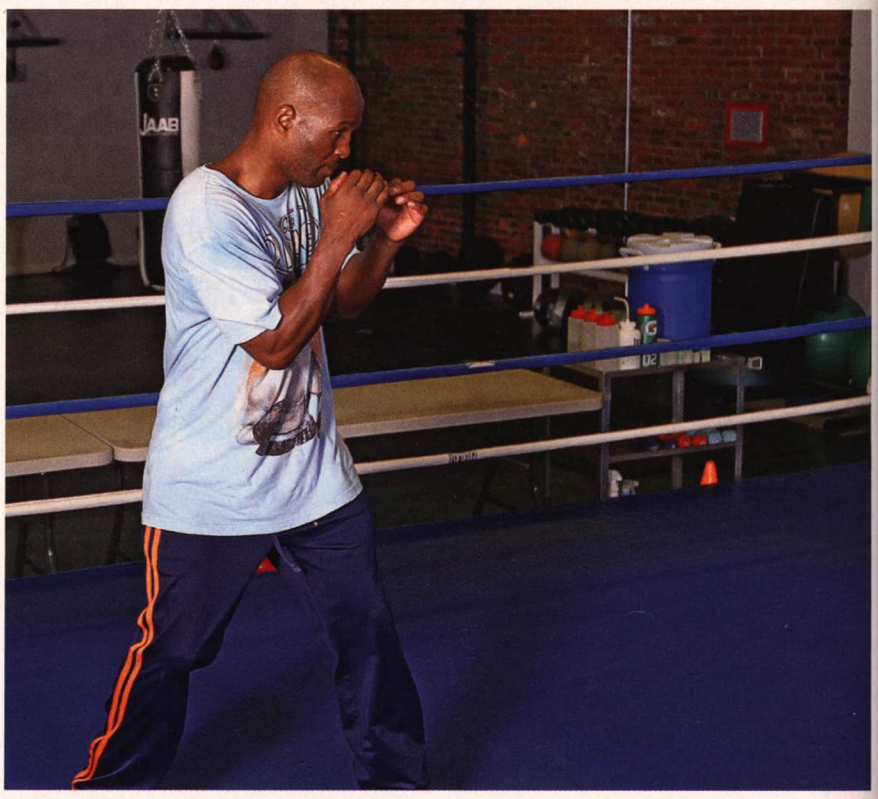
Most people think of shadow boxing as standing in front of the mirror and throwing punches and practicing moves. Fighters do it all the time, but how is that shadow boxing? You're not looking at your shadow; you're looking at your reflection in the mirror. And all you're learning is what you look like when you're practicing boxing in front of the mirror.

You could practice the same way following your shadow on the wall, which is where "shadow boxing" comes from. But that's not the best way to do it either. The way you get the most out of it is to get up in that ring and move around in it, practice your moves in there and imagine the fight in your mind.

You get up in there and jab, jab, step to the side, and hook. You slip a right hand and dig a hook to the body, step to the side and hook again. *That's* shadow boxing. It's playing out a fight in your mind, imagining your opponent is up there in the ring with you and you're doing your thing and he's doing his.

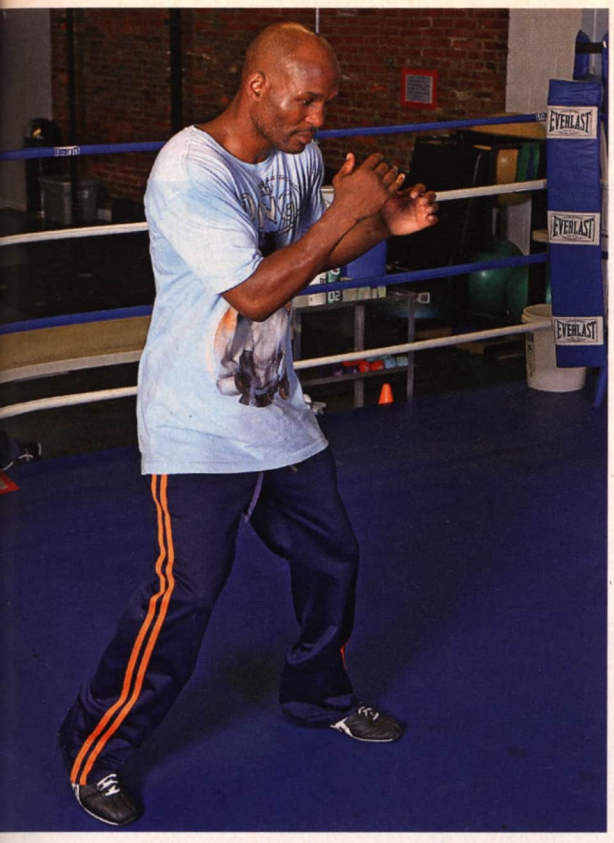
You get up in there and feel the canvas under your feet and move around in it. Count the number of steps backward from the center of the ring to the ropes so you know how far you can move back when you're sparring. Feel the corners, slip and feint, jab, and practice all the things you've been working on when sparring and hitting the bag and working the pads. Shadow boxing is in your mind, not in front of a mirror. It's in your mind and in the ring.

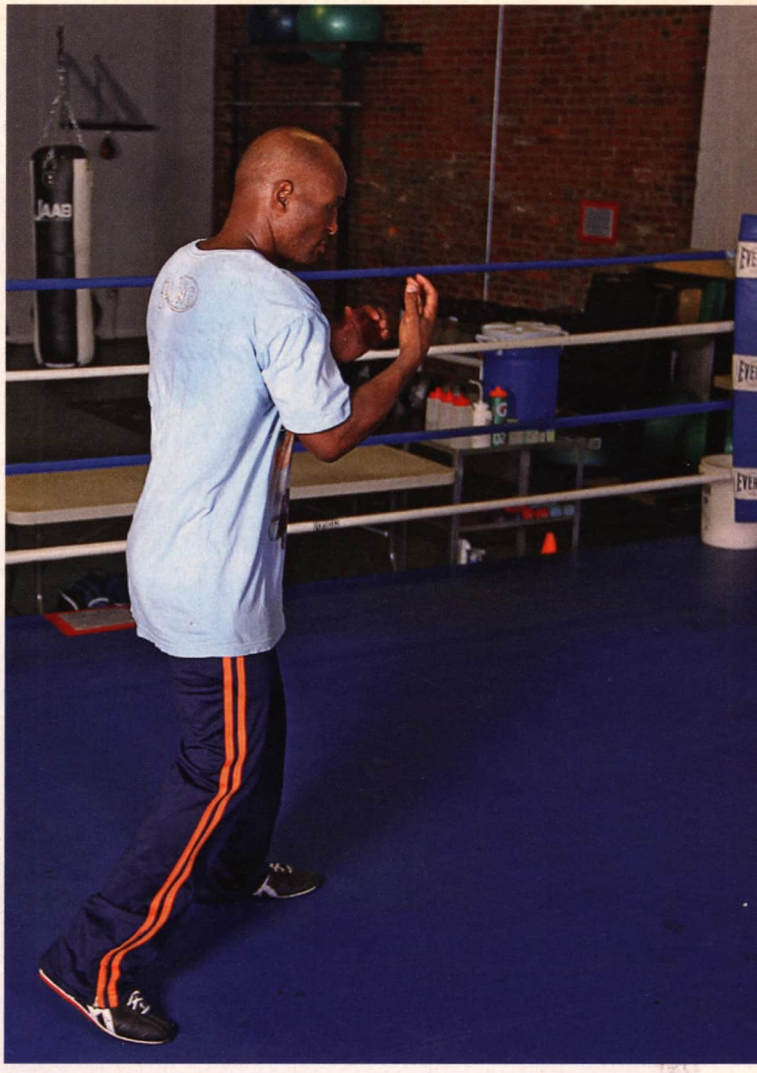
**BERNARD HOPKINS**
**Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.**

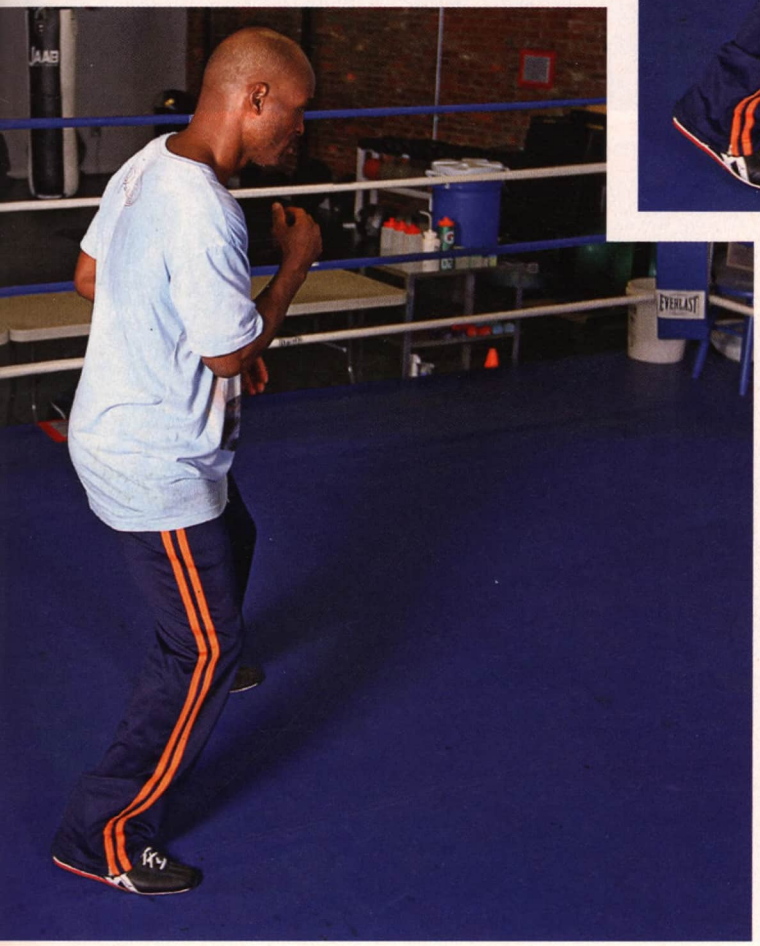



## ALL FUNDAMENTALS

If you don't do it perfect when you're shadow boxing, you won't do it perfect anywhere. I'm not posing in these pictures; I'm shadow boxing, and my hands are up; my chin is down; my eyes are on an opponent only I can see, and I'm on balance. This is where you perfect it.



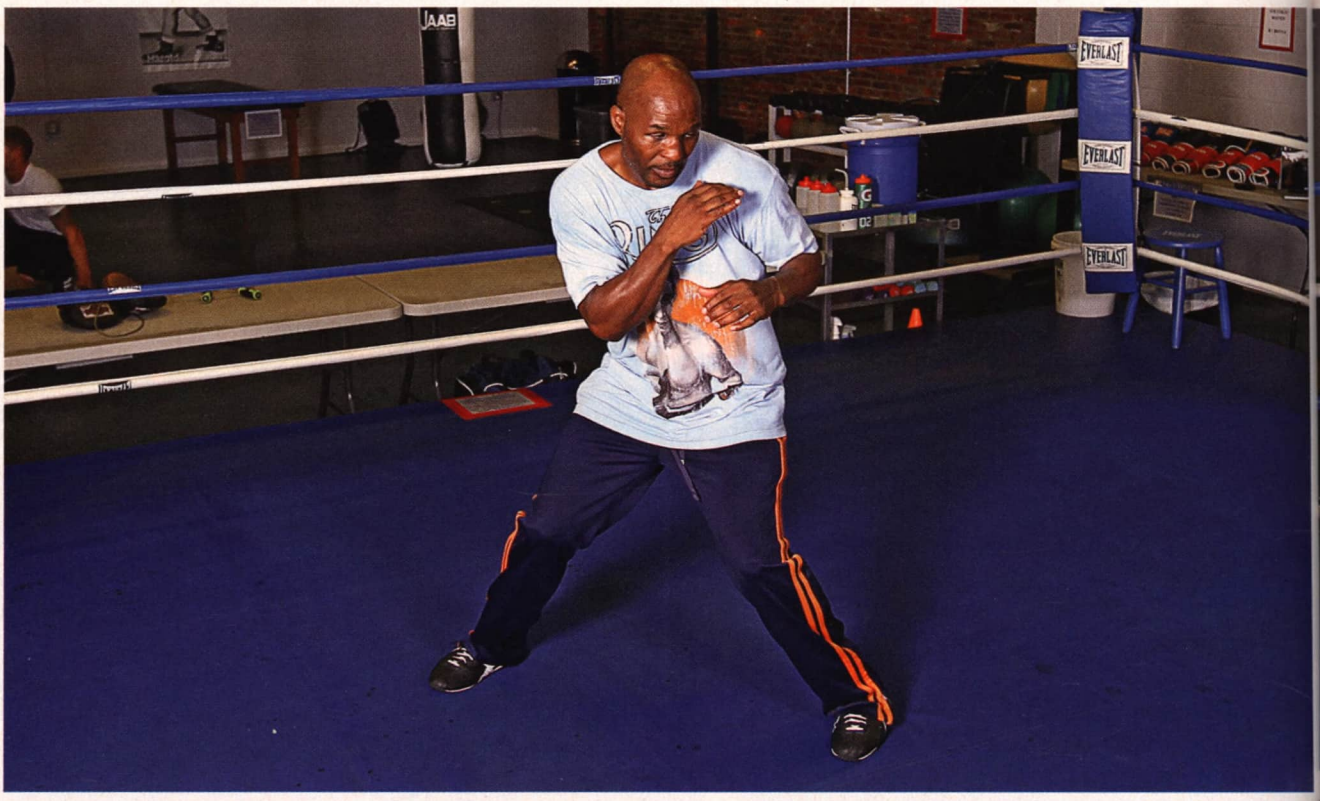



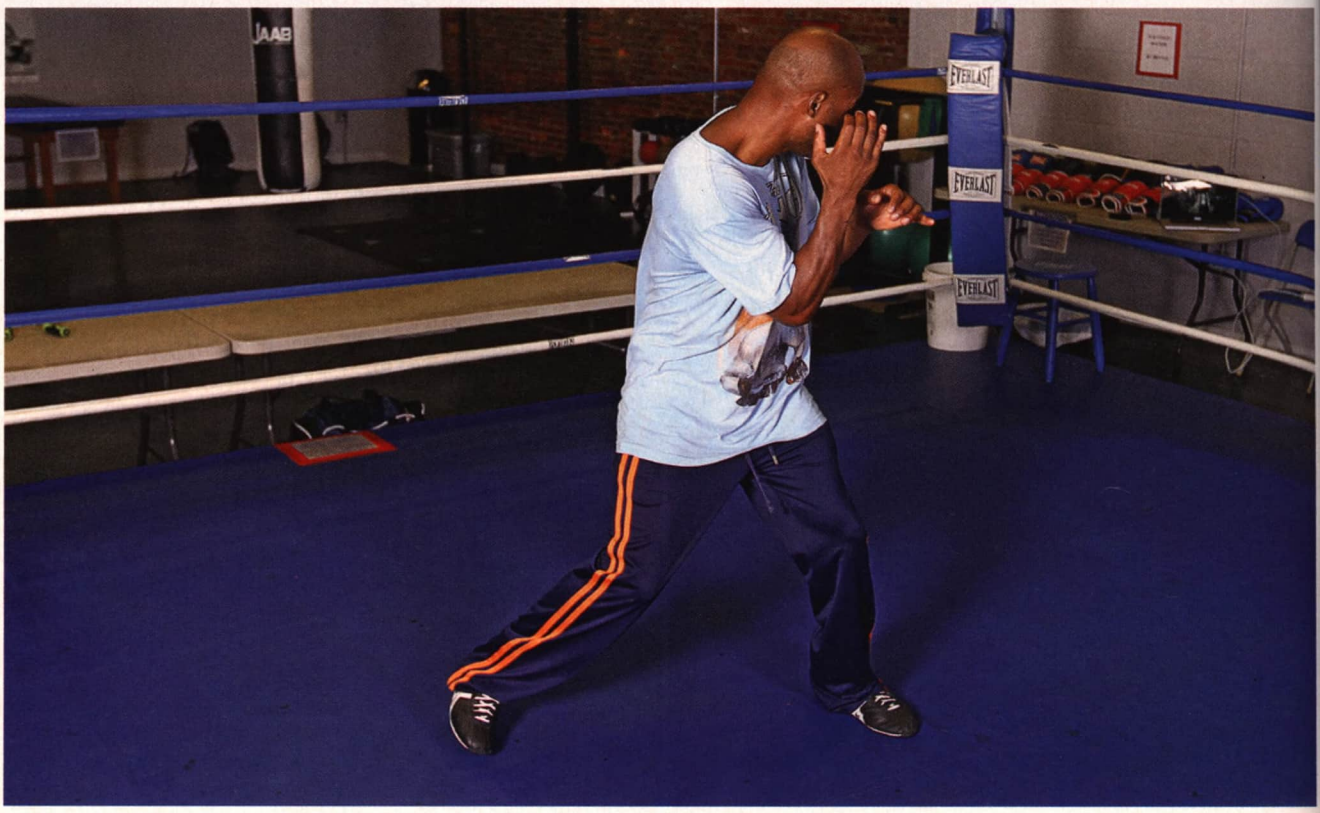

## PRACTICE THOSE MOVES

You don't stand right in front of your opponent and not move when you're in a fight. Why would you do it when you're shadow boxing? Here I'm letting a jab fall short, stepping in with a right uppercut, then stepping back out before I can get countered. Keep your moves tight, stay on balance, and execute your moves the way you know you're supposed to.

# DEFENSE COUNTS

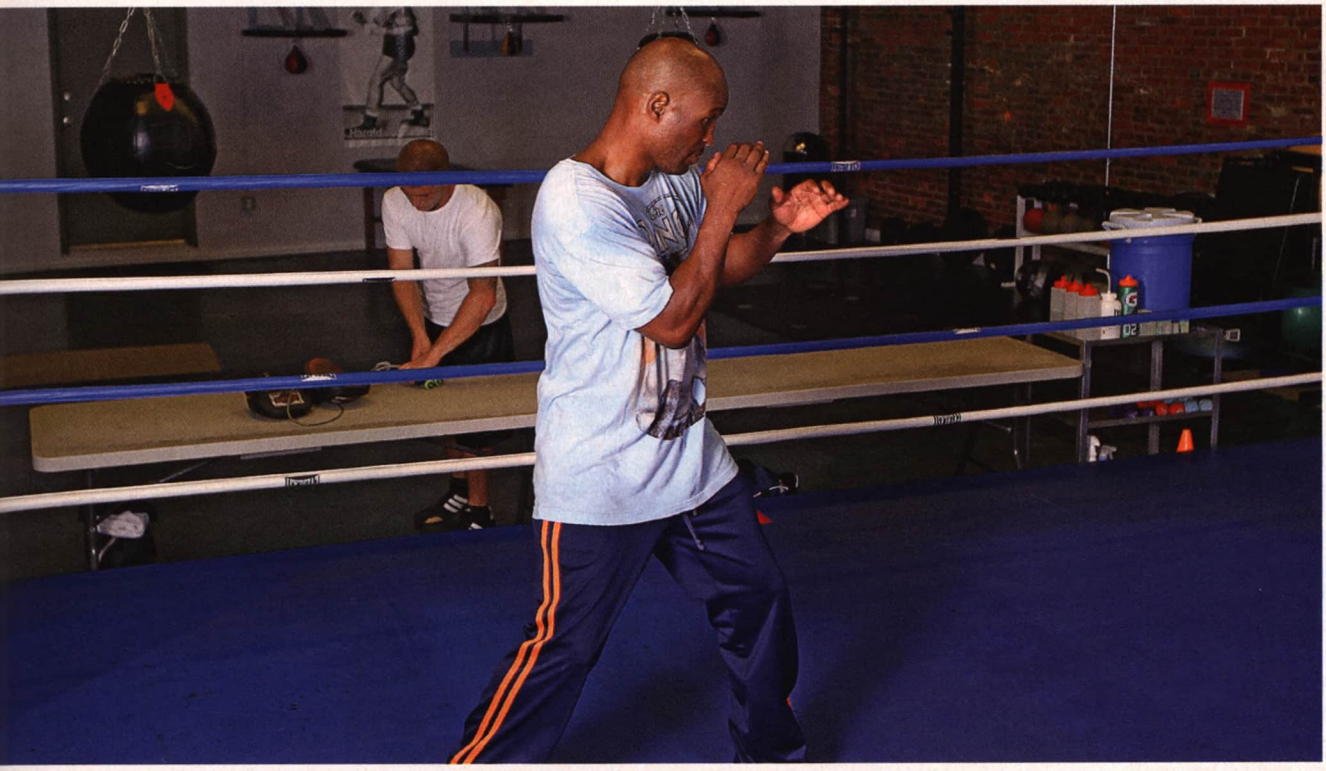
You're not just in there throwing punches. The opponent is throwing punches at you too, and getting good at defense takes longer than getting good at offense. So when you're shadow boxing you're imagining your opponent throwing punches at you. You use the moves you've learned to avoid them, getting position and countering, the way I'm doing here. Shadow boxing is the whole thing: offense, defense, movement, countering, positioning, balance—all the things you do in a fight.

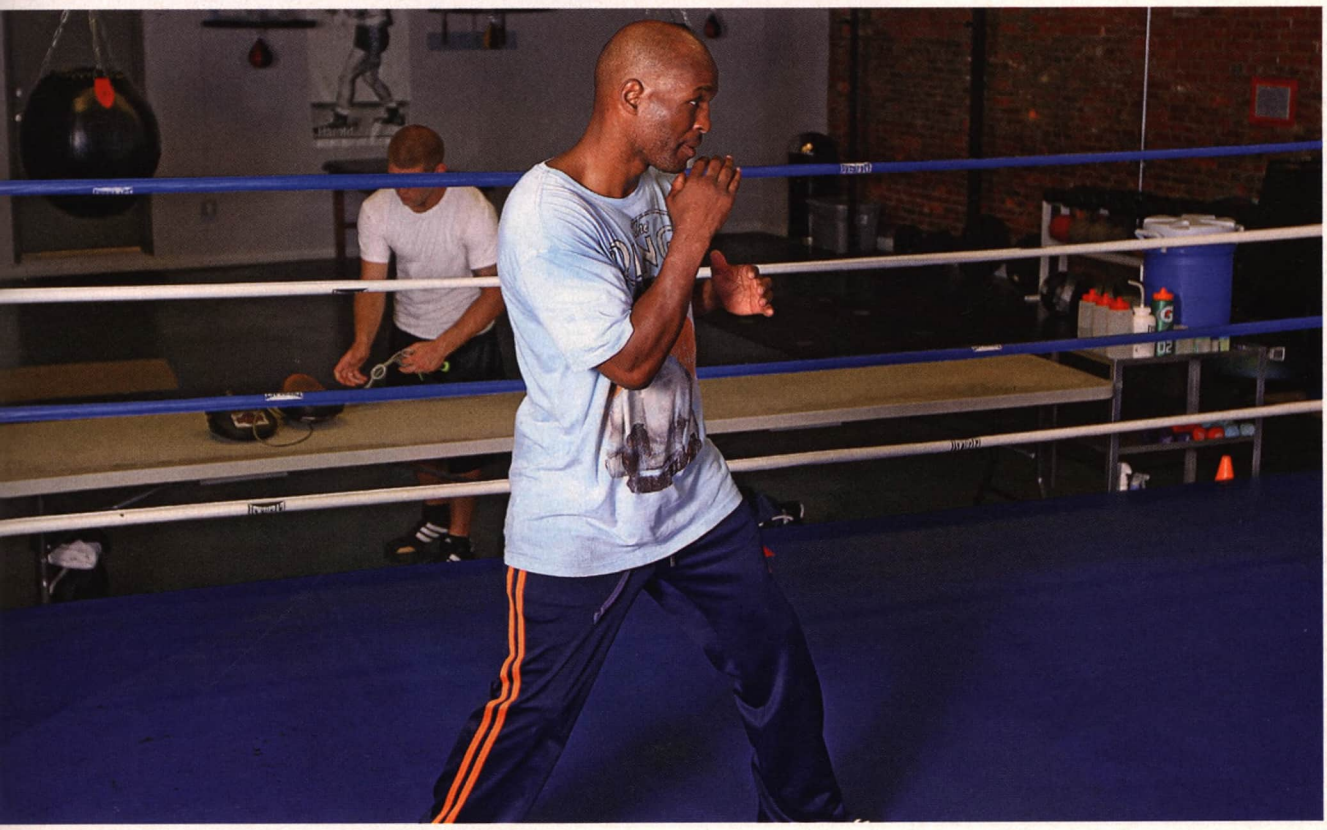


## DON'T WORRY ABOUT MAKING A TIGHT FIST

This is the one thing you do differently when you're shadow boxing: You don't have to worry about making a tight fist. As you can see here, my hands are almost fully open. I'm not making a fist, and it doesn't matter. You're shadow boxing to practice your moves and technique. That's what matters. Don't feel like your hands have to be closed tight. You close your fists when you're hitting something. You're not hitting anything but air when you shadow box so there's no reason to make a tight fist.





By Michael Rivest

# Gold Shortage

Rau'shee Warren. Say the name, and Americans raise downcast eyes. He's our big hope for Gold in 2012. A two-time Olympian, the gifted 114-pound southpaw has it all—speed, power, and experience.

Let's face it, the USA boxing team is desperate for Olympic hardware. Andre Ward won Gold in 2004, but, before that, we have to go back to 1996 when David Reid captured one in Atlanta. There has been Silver and Bronze peppered throughout, but precious little gold.

Remember when we didn't have to wait for single boxing messiahs to deliver us? In 1988, the USA won three Gold Medals, four if you count Roy Jones (and you *should* count Roy Jones). And in 1984, the USA earned nine, for Pete's sake.

"We used to be *it*," said Ray Leonard, wistfully, "and it bothers me so much."

What happened was a combination of factors both in and out of the ring; what to do about it may not be as complicated as it seems.

"The entire playing field has advanced," said Anthony Bartkowski, USA Boxing's executive director. "Other countries have developed in all sports, not just boxing."

He's right, of course. It's a vastly different world than it was in 1976 when Sugar Ray, Howard Davis, Leo Randolph, and the Spinks brothers tattooed the competition. "We used to have to train for one Russian," Bartkowski continued, "but, when the Soviet Union broke up, it became 13. Then there's the Asian direction. They're very aggressive in their sports science. All countries competing with us have grown."

Did USA Boxing drop its hands while the rest of the world was coming forward? "Not really," Bartkowski said.

Most feel that USA Boxing was hardly blameless for the decline. "Lack of stability was a major key," said Andre Ward, referring not only to the quadrennial turnover in national coaches but also to the musical chair leadership at USA Boxing itself. Bartkowski is the 11th executive director in 15 years.

"Take the Cuban program," Ward continued. "They have a set standard, and the same coach everybody knows will be there each time. They [the athletes] know what to expect and just what they're in for in the training."

Warren agrees. "Every four years, it's a different coach for us," he said. "Both times I've been in the Olympics, I saw the same coaches on the other teams and the same athletes. They've grown."

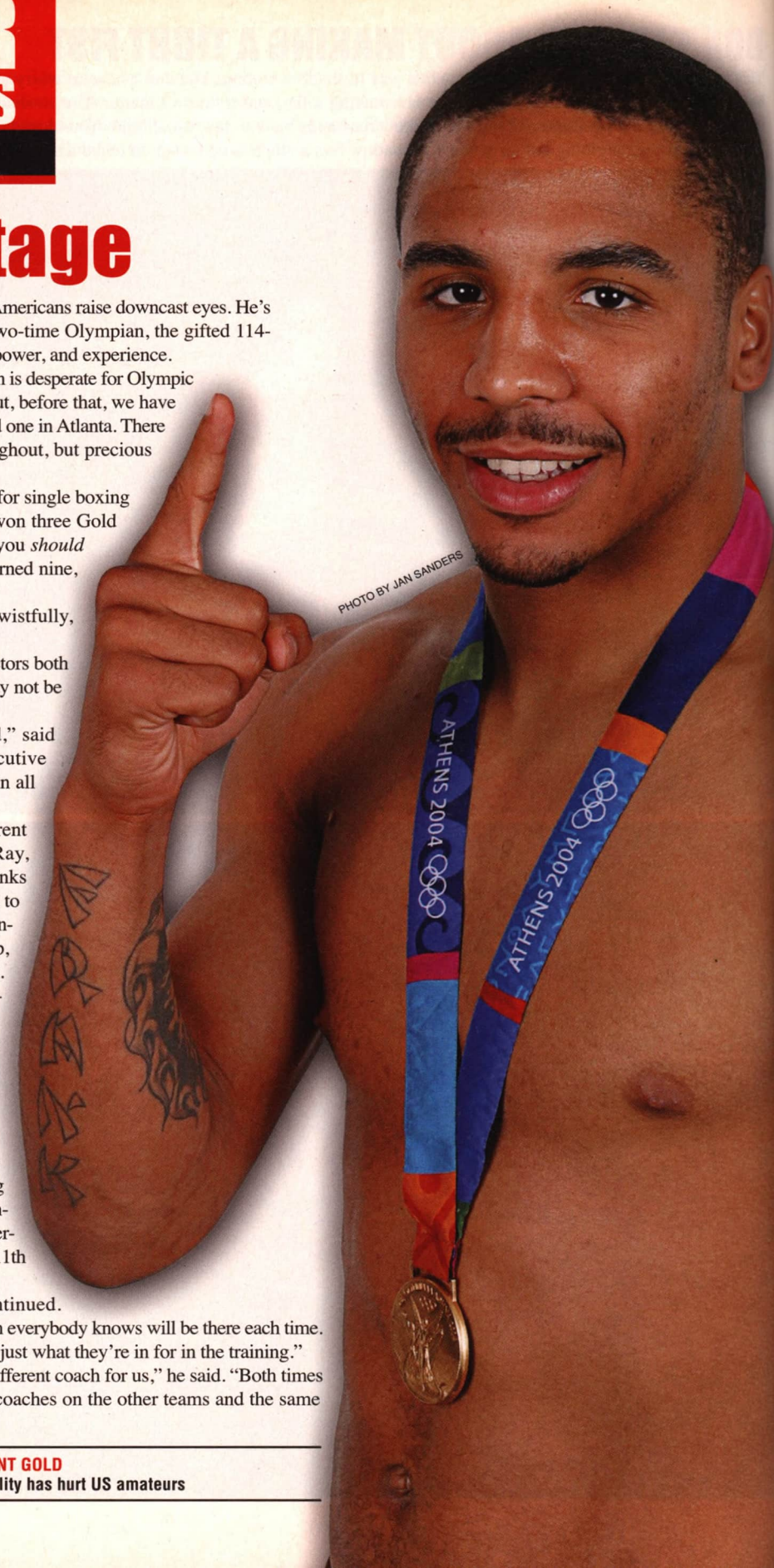



PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

**MOST RECENT GOLD**
**Ward believes a lack of stability has hurt US amateurs**

Indeed they have. It appears, at least in part, to be a case of Rome burning while the USA fiddled. Bartkowski, who only assumed his role this year, has his hands full.

Joe Zanders, the newly appointed US National Coach, knows what he's up against too.

"We have young kids, some barely old enough to qualify, and take them into competition against 25 and 28-year-olds," said Zanders. "Besides, the way the process works, we have only two years to develop our boxers. We're still selecting our team, and the Olympics are next year. We have to find a way to augment our program. For one thing, we need to hold on to our athletes."

Most, however, sign lucrative pro deals as soon as they can, rather than wait for a hard-earned moment in the sun that may not come.

Rau'shee Warren found his own way to stick around. He signed with the LA Matadors of the World Series of Boxing (WSB), now completing its first season. WSB signs athletes in three-year contracts for decent money and health benefits.

Although they get paid, WSB athletes keep their amateur status, and, with it, Olympic hopes.

"It's been the best thing for me," Warren said. "We fight other countries and have foreign countries on our team, so the sparring is all different. We learn from each other."

**FINDING A WAY TO STAY**
**Warren has extended his amateur career by joining the LA Matadors**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WBS

International experience, so valuable to an elite boxer, is increasingly hard for Americans to secure. Participation in international tournaments has been made more difficult since the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reduced its annual funding to USA Boxing from $1-million per year to $600,000.

International tournament involvement is lacking as limited funds have meant only "friendly duals" between the USA and one other country. At these events, our boxers get limited exposure and fewer bouts. And since half the judges are American, athletes lose valuable exposure there as well. Big events featuring many countries offer more boxing, international judges, and a better use of limited funds.

Bartkowski promises more effective use of resources beginning in September when the US team embarks upon a European tour. "Our eye is on the task in front of us," Bartkowski said, "and that will involve more international competition.

"We have an Annual High Performance Plan," he noted, a plan that has as its prime feature, coordinating efforts with the athletes' personal coaches back home, the coaches who, in most instances, have been with the boxer from the beginning. There has been a breakdown in USA Boxing's connectedness to an athlete's home base, something Bartkowski is determined to address.

But that problem is only part of a broad cultural shift that has taken place in the country, one that will need longitudinal planning to address, the kind that will only be possible if USA Boxing settles down and key leaders stay put.

Amateur boxing used to be supported by a deep, community-based infrastructure. In the world that produced Ray Leonard, boxing was a key fixture of Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, JCCs, and CYOs. Proudly committed to young people of their communities, these organizations used to know the relationship between youth boxing and self-esteem.

"Boxing was everywhere then," Leonard said.

"We're also competing with other sports," Bartkowski added, "Kids who might have boxed are now involved with gymnastics, wrestling, and soccer."

Youth coming to those sports are greeted by USA Boxing's sister National Governing Bodies, which are well-funded by a vibrant community-based infrastructure.

Youth may not be so much lost to boxing as distracted from it. Also, many of the kids who come into boxing gyms are not the kids who would find their way to the soccer field. They walk in with nothing but the sneakers on their feet and a better offer from the gang member on the corner.

What's needed is the type of community mobilization and marketing provided by Golden Gloves of America (GGA), for instance. Through steady and consistent leadership and a nationwide community-based organizational structure, GGA generates millions of dollars each year in well-publicized events in communities throughout the country.

What would happen to the current weak boxing infrastructure if billboards now promoting MMA, started reading, "Boxing Lessons Are Life Lessons" and showed a picture of Sugar Ray Leonard with a Gold Medal around his neck? Kids today may think he's just that guy from *Dancing With The Stars*, but that's the problem: They've been allowed to forget.

Imagine a grassroots amateur boxing system generating its own funds without reliance on an outside source. Let the USOC fawn over kids on parallel bars.

In such a world, anything might be possible. Olympic boxers might just stick around until the next time around. They might even win gold, lots of it, and every four years too. ■

***Michael Rivest can be reached at mrivest2@gmail.com.***

# THE SWEETER SCIENCE

By Chris Richards

# Velez Hands Cooper Her First Loss

American culture is built on winning. "Nothing," the saying goes, "succeeds like success." Vince Lombardi was famously misquoted as saying, "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing." One defeat can stamp a competitor with the most despised label in America: loser.

Melinda Cooper was used to winning. She captured the WIBA flyweight title by stopping Anissa Zamarron in the ninth round back in 2005. Then her career stalled. Winning fights was easy for the athletic and aggressive Cooper. Getting quality opponents was another matter. Cooper fought just seven times against five fighters in five years. The combined record of her opponents in those seven fights was 37-29-4.

Cooper's camp deflected responsibility for her inactivity and lack of world-class competition by stating that better opponents were simply afraid to fight her. They billed her alphabet title fight with Ada Velez in San Jose, Costa Rica, as her big chance after five years of being ducked by fighters in four weight divisions. Th weren't alone. One writer, neglecting Velez e cept to praise her for having the guts to fi Cooper, referred to the Las Vegas native as "le endary." Sugar Ray Robinson would have be shivering in his sneakers after reading this enth siastic send-up of Cooper. Now, it seems cle that the expectations were a tad high.

Velez was determined not to be a walk- part in "The Melinda Cooper Story." She w clearly a cut above Cooper's previous opp nents. The Florida-based Puerto Rican mig have been 40 years old, but she had won a thrice defended the WIBA super bantamweig title before losing a dubious hometown decisi to Denmark's Anita Christensen in 2004. Eve the Danish press said she had been robbed.

Velez also had inactivity problems. She spe two years out of the ring after losing to Christe sen and didn't fight at all between 2007 an 2010. What was the big difference? She'd foug three times in 2010 against opponents with

## MEXICAN STANDOFF

Boxing is usually a zero-sum game with a winner and a loser. Mexican stars Ana Maria Torres, 24-3-3 (14), and Jackie Nava, 24-3-3 (11), brought nearly identical records into the April 16 fight at Boca Del Rio, Vera Cruz (Mexico) World Trade Center. Torres was looking to capture an alphabet title in her second weight division. Nava wanted to prove that she, not Torres, was Mexico's best female fighter with a career-defining victory. Both were disappointed by the draw verdict.

Torres started faster. She committed to her jab and her body attack from the opening bell and punctuated her strong first round with a wicked left hook that snapped Nava's head back like it was on a rubber band. She carried her momentum into the second round. Nava had a hard time staying off the ropes, and Torres used those opportunities to land punishing right hands that had noticeably marked Nava's left eye before the second round was over. Nava got her jab working faster in round three and managed to protect her head, but Torres kept coming forward and landing to the body.

Rounds four and five were difficult to score as Nava kept flicking her jab but proved unable or unwilling to make it more than a nuisance to Torres. As a nuisance, however, it was effective enough that the judges may have rewarded Nava for her fast starts in both rounds.

Torres wasn't going anywhere, however, and used patience and big punches to steer Nava back into the ropes and punish her.

Nava rallied to give herself a much-needed boost over the next three rounds. She finally committed to sticking, rather than flicking, the jab. The harder jab brought her much needed space to make adjustments, and she began to land strong counters at long range and to flurry behind them. With "The Aztec Princess" using all her weapons, the gap closed.

Torres still wasn't going anywhere. "The Warrior" landed nasty power punches behind the jab to keep Nava on the ropes for much of the last two rounds. Nava hung tough, had her moments, and bloodied Torres' nose. Torres kept coming and landed the bigger punches until the final bell.

All three judges scored the fight 95-95 (THE RING had it 96-94, for Torres) and the result was a unanimous draw. Neither fighter got the career-defining victory she was looking for, but they produced a superb fight for the reported 10,000 fans in attendance and a great rematch opportunity for their promoters.

**IN YOUR FACE**
Velez lands a left to Cooper's jaw

PHOTO BY YURI CORTEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**CLOSE ENCOUNTER**
**Torres and Nava trade punches en route to stalemate**

PHOTO BY HECTOR VIVAS/JAM MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES

combined record of 51-7-2, and was, therefore, far better prepared for a demanding fight than Cooper.

Things started badly for Cooper before she ever set foot in the ring. Someone in Cooper's camp made the decision to blare "Born in the USA" over the National Stadium's speakers as she made her ring entrance. The crowd responded with a wave of boos. It was immediately clear that Cooper was in hostile territory and would need a special performance to win.

The savvy Velez did not allow Cooper to fight her fight. Instead, she avoided exchanges and kept working the jab. It may not have been pretty, but it succeeded in keeping Cooper off her game. Cooper pressed the action and threw the more serious punches, but she was unable to capitalize when she hurt Velez.

James Pena, Cooper's trainer, was critical of Velez' strategy and questioned her heart.

"If Ada had stood and traded punches," said a obviously biased Pena, "Melinda would have knocked her out. That's what boxing is supposed to be about."

Instead, Cooper came out on the wrong side of a 96-94, 96-94, 94-96 split decision. Cooper dropped to 21-1 (11) and Velez advanced to 19-3-3 (6).

Pena admitted that the fight was close and Cooper could have done more to win, but he insists his fighter really won. "I think Melinda thought she had it in the bag when Ada started to run," he said.

Velez certainly showed the punishment she took more than Cooper, her face prompting Pena to add, "She didn't look like a winner to me." He also said that they would be happy to fight a rematch and that location was not an issue. "If they fight again, Melinda will knock her out fast."

This is exactly what a fighter's corner is supposed to say, but Pena isn't alone in thinking Cooper was the winner. One fan, commenting on a Costa Rican newspaper's web site, disparaged both the decision and the paper's reporting of the fight.

Only a rematch will prove whether or not Cooper's camp is right or wrong. Having also been on the painful side of a controversial decision, Velez should understand the good karma inherent in granting Cooper another shot. In the end, however, the best argument for a rematch might have come from fight photographer and the author of *Extraordinary Women Of The Ring*, Mary Ann Owen.

"I've known Melinda since she was 15 years old," Owen said, "She is a very good fighter and has won every award in the amateurs. Velez is also an excellent fighter with a strong amateur background. Women's boxing needs more quality matches like their first fight." ■

***Chris Richards can be contacted at chris.m.richards@gmail.com.***

By Mike Coppinger

# Featherweight Javier Fortuna

Dominican Republic featherweight Javier Fortuna's American debut came in just his 14th pro bout, at B. B. King Blues Club and Grill in Times Square in the heart of New York City. It was the first time most of the crowd had seen him, and Fortuna made quite an impression, knocking out previously undefeated Victor Valenzuela in just 70 seconds, rendering his foe unconscious with a single overhand left.

It was Fortuna's seventh stoppage in the first round, a testament to the Dominican's power.

He has the right representation, advised by Sampson Lewkowicz, who is known for discovering international talent such as world middleweight champion Sergio Martinez, lightweight contender Michael Katsidis, featherweight titleholder Chris John, and junior welter Lucas Matthysse, among others.

"I've had Javier since his pro debut. I realized right away that he has unbelievable talent and the heart of a lion. After he hits you, you go down," said Lewkowicz, who also claims credit for bringing Manny Pacquiao to the United States. "I have no doubt that he will turn out to be a commodity, something special for boxing."

In Fortuna's second US fight, on the undercard of Martinez' defense against Sergiy Dzinziruk, he knocked out Derrick Wilson, by far the best opponent of his young career, in the eighth round of an all-action encounter. Southpaw Fortuna displayed many of his attributes that night: boxing smarts, deft movement, devastating power, and a never-say-die attitude.

"I want people to recognize that I'm a puncher," said Fortuna through translator Cicilio Flores, his strength and conditioning coach. "Even though I know I'm still young, I want to be known as a smart, intelligent fighter."

Fortuna is a stablemate of Martinez, not only sharing the same adviser but also training at the same gym, World Crown and Sports in Oxnard, California, under the tutelage of Pablo Sarmiento.

Fortuna and his seven siblings were raised in poverty in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. It's what fuels his desire to be one of the best in the sport.

"One of my goals is for my family to live better and to have things that we didn't have growing up," said Fortuna. "It's okay for them to put the pressure on me to provide. I'm a grown man and I'm going to provide for my family.

Still, there's a downside to seeking fame and fortune in a foreign land.

"Being away from my family, my mom and my dad, just being away from home [is the toughest part of boxing]," said Fortuna, who has a three-year-old daughter named Sujeiry and sports a 14-0 (11) with 1 no-contest record. "But I understand this is a sacrifice, and I'm willing to make it. I have all the support in the world. [My family] is encouraging me to be a world champ and a successful one."

Fortuna began boxing at age 11 on the advice of boxing coaches who saw him getting into constant scuffles on the streets. One day, a trainer called his mother and urged her to let them train her son. Both Fortuna and his mother thought it was a great idea because he would be mentored and learn to defend himself. At first, however, there was a roadblock to his genesis as a pugilist.

His older brother Jonathon, a boxer himself, didn't want his younger sibling to get into the dangerous sport. So after his brother was done training, Javier would sneak into the gym and work out. This went on for several months, but, when his brother finally caught him training and discovered how well he was doing, he encouraged Javier to continue boxing.

Fortuna went on to prosper, bringing home medals from various international amateur tournaments in Mexico, Ecuador, India, and Morocco, giving him vast international experience along the way.

"My immediate goal is to become world champ," said Fortuna. "I would like to train hard, keep learning, and be able to unify all the titles at 126 pounds. After I dominate 126 and defend my title a few times, I would like to win the title at 130."

While Fortuna's older brother continues to box, he's not as seriously involved with the sport as his younger sibling.

"He's still an amateur," said Fortuna. "He's still in tourneys and whatnot, but he doesn't want to turn pro."

Fortuna has fought the majority of his bouts in his native Dominican Republic, but his last three bouts have taken place elsewhere. As we went to press, he was slated to fight on May 13 in Lewkowicz' native Uruguay.

"We want to give him the flavor of being international," said Lewkowicz. "I took John and Julius Jackson (sons of former junior middleweight and middleweight titleholder Julian Jackson) all over South America and Mexico to get that flavor that will help them in the future to be a great boxer and a great athlete."

The 20-year-old Fortuna, who admires Floyd Mayweather "for his work ethic," is a tireless worker.

## PRO RECORD

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **2009** | | |
| March 30 | Ricardo Johnson, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic | KO 1 |
| May 16 | Cristian Martinez, Santo Domingo | KO 1 |
| June 29 | Jose Vidal, Santo Domingo.. | KO 2 |
| July 25 | Ambiorix Ciriaco, Santo Domingo | KO 2 |
| Aug. 22 | Luis Sosa, Nagua, Dominican Republic | KO 1 |
| Sept. 26 | Carlos Diaz, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands | W 4 |
| Nov. 16 | Alejandro Lebron, Santo Domingo | W 6 |
| Dec. 21 | Miguelo Tavarez, Santo Domingo | KO 1 |
| **2010** | | |
| March 12 | Juan Carlos Rosario, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic | KO 2 |
| July 3 | William Tapia, Santo Domingo | KO 1 |
| Aug. 19 | Francisco Lorenzo, Santo Domingo | NC 1 |
| Sept. 18 | Cristian Martinez, Santo Domingo | KO 1 |
| Oct. 29 | Gregorio Torres, Mexicali, Mexico | W 6 |
| Dec. 1 | Victor Valenzuela, New York, NY | KO 1 |
| **2011** | | |
| March 12 | Derrick Wilson, Mashantucket, CT | KO 8 |

| FIGHTS | WON | LOST | DRAW | KOs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 11 |

"You don't have to ask him to run or anything like that," said Flores. "He loves training hard, and he loves learning. It's a pleasure to work with a fighter like this."

As Fortuna climbs the ranks of contention and his fights are televised nationally on a regular basis, promoter Lou DiBella thinks that fans will be enthralled with him.

"Javier Fortuna is one of the most exciting young prospects I've seen in boxing," said DiBella, who has promoted both of Fortuna's US fights and is working toward a long-term deal with the fighter. "He's a tremendous puncher. He's exciting; he's reckless. He leaves himself open, and he makes wild fights. He's got tremendous power, and I think he has the ability to be a great TV fighter and very possibly world champion. He still needs some work, he's a young kid, and I anticipate that he's going to be appearing on a lot more undercards. You'll see him on *ShoBox* or ESPN2 in the next four or five months. I think he's on the road to HBO."

How well he performs, as the opposition gets progressively tougher, will decide if Fortuna can become the next of what DiBella calls "a Sampson Lewkowicz special." ■

# FIGHT DOCTOR

by Margaret Goodman, M.D.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

**SWOLLEN SHUT**
Morales kept going against Maidana despite an injury

# How Morales Flipped The Script

At Las Vegas' MGM Grand Garden Arena on April 9, Eric Morales shocked all doubters by demonstrating he could once again go toe-to-toe against an elite fighter. With 58 fights against some of boxing's best, including a decision victory over Manny Pacquiao in 2005, the 34-year-old Mexican puncher resembled the Morales of old.

Following a third-round knockout loss to Pacquiao in 2006 and a 12-round decision loss to David Diaz in '07, Morales, who began his pro career at the age of 16, fit the profile of a fighter who had experienced too many wars and announced his retirement.

Still, like many boxers well past their prime, it wasn't surprising to see Morales return to the ring after a 31-month hiatus. But when the popular Mexican, who has eased back into competition with a trio of wins over modest opposition, was suddenly scheduled to face Marcos Maidana on a pay-per-view card, the skeptics abounded.

"Morales surprised everybody," said HBO commentator Larry Merchant. "Every reporter was measuring the distance from the ring to the hospital."

I, too, feared for Morales' safety. I was fortunate to work or attend each of his Las Vegas fights from 1995 to 2005. Early on, he was calm and relaxed, always in perfect physical condition, competing at 122 pounds. As his career wins accumulated and he began fighting at 130 pounds, Morales attended many weigh-ins wearing a plastic warm-up suit, sucking on a sliver of ice, and resembling a concentration camp victim. This coincided with stories and photographs of a pudgy-cheeked Morales walking around at 180 pounds or more in between bouts. Irrespective of age, no world-class athlete can compete at his peak ballooning up and down in weight and abusing their bodies between fights.

So, how did Morales change the destiny that befell so many others like him?

"Morales wasn't just a brawler; he had skills—like [Marco Antonio] Barrera," said Merchant. "Their willingness to do battle is part of their makeup as a fighter. I honor him for it."

Merchant also believes that the years Morales had away from the ring restored him physically and mentally. "He came back at a more natural weight, and he had the kind of opponent in front of him to help him turn back the clock. If he fought [Amir] Khan, he might look 10 years older, but, with Maidana, who has the same strengths and toughness, coming to him, Morales looked 10 years younger. I call Maidana, 'Kid Cahones,' and Morales was 'Kid Cahones' before him!"

Merchant understands the dangers surrounding making weight and noted that, "Morales is tall. When young, these guys can make these crazy weights and recover overnight. As they get older, they can beat the scale, but the cost is so great they can't perform. If they go up in weight, they can't measure up. Against Maidana, Morales looked to be fit and competing at the right weight."

Trainer and former welterweight titleholder Buddy McGirt has experienced first-hand the grueling toll a long boxing career can have on the body. McGirt retired at 33 with a record of 73-6-1 (48). He has trained some of the best, including Arturo Gatti and Antonio Tarver.

"Sometimes you have guys that need time off to rejuvenate," said McGirt. "Not everyone can do that. Maidana is a puncher, so styles could have helped. Only God and Morales know what happened that night."

McGirt thinks that Morales' success against Maidana could be partly mental. "Maybe he had something to prove?"

Merchant agrees: "There has always been depth and deep pride in what he's doing. It was culturally important to him. That is a rare thing."

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

**REVITALIZED**
**Morales rolled back the years against Maidana**

Dr. Ron Kamm, former medical director for F.I.S.T. (Fighters' Initiative for Support and Training) and current director of Sports Psychiatry Associates in Oakhurst, New Jersey, continues to work with countless professional and amateur athletes. He believes that an offensive-minded fighter has an easier time knowing and accomplishing what they want to do. As a result, they have a simpler task in returning to the ring after a long career and a layoff than their defensive counterpart.

"An offensive fighter initiates the action. No athlete, especially a champion, can be objective about their own physical ability. They have to have confidence and faith in their abilities to overcome," said Dr. Kamm. "George Foreman did that when he beat Michael Moorer. Whether you are Tom Brady or Erik Morales, it always helps to have something to prove."

When asked to contrast Morales' performance to less successful attempts by Roy Jones, Kamm said, "I think he [Jones] lost interest. Now, he wants to turn it on, but age won't allow it."

Kamm, who works with amateur and professional athletes of all endeavors, counseling them on performance enhancement said, "I think they should visualize themselves like a great fighter who has come back."

Dr. Kamm will have an athlete close their eyes and picture themselves next to someone they wish to emulate and then imagine that person's energy travels inside them. "Like Mickey Ward came back against Gatti. The fighter says, 'That's who I am' and does it."

At a prefight exam, I once asked Evander Holyfield what was his key to winning. He said that if you can absorb the pain and take whatever your opponent has to give, you could win. I believe this same philosophy to be part of Morales' physical and mental makeup. Even though he lost a close decision, his adeptness in fighting Maidana with one eye swollen shut for most of the bout told us there was something more than just his physicality.

Former Nevada chief ring physician Flip Homansky has an alternate take on all this. "The steel jaw is the last offensive tactic to go," said Homansky. "Morales is the classic fighter who can get older, lose some skills, and still retain a punch. He doesn't depend on speed, agility, and movement. He is the classic guy who will be a crowd pleaser until he's got nothing left physically and mentally. Can he still excite a crowd and sell tickets? Absolutely! But that's the danger."

In the end, Morales' performance, like so many recent upsets, demonstrates that there isn't a script to boxing. Merchant said it best: "There's always one great fight left in a great fighter."

Morales' problem now is figuring out if he still has one more. ■

# HITTING ON THE BREAK

by Jim Bagg

**FLOUNDERING FAVORITE**
Ishida sinks Kirkland

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

# Kirk-Land Of The Lost

What a shame. James Kirkland went to jail and got his entire back covered in all these badass tattoos, and Nobuhiro Ishida wouldn't let him show off the tats. Ishida just kept hitting him with all those straight punches, and then that pesky canvas insisted on blocking everyone's view of Kirkland's body art.

Look, the Baggareeno is a hundred times smarter than all of you dopes sitting at home reading this, your lives going nowhere, the pages of the "round card girl of the month" section sticking together. But even the Great Baggzoo didn't see this one coming. Kirkland was *not* supposed to get knocked down three times in the first round and lose to some journeyman from Japan. To put things in terms familiar to Ishida's countrymen, Ishida beating Kirkland was akin to a dead fish grabbing the knives and slicing up the master sushi chef. That's the level of upset we're talking about here.

So, to quote the Bagghannesburg's first wife when she came home from a weekend away having left her hubby with two bottles of Jack, a dog with a bladder infection, a couple pounds of greasy pork sausage, and no plunger: "What the hell happened here?" We can start with some reasonable, logical excuses. First, Kirkland took Ishida lightly. Ishida's kayo rate suggested Paulie-Malignaggi-like punching power. Wouldn't you take him lightly? Second, some reports had Kirkland struggling to make weight. Hey, dropping pounds can weaken a man. That's why you'll never catch the Baggamaniac dieting. And third, Kirkland and his new trainer Kenny Adams reportedly weren't clicking. Maybe Kirkland didn't fear Adams the way he—and every man—fears Ann Wolfe, so he didn't feel the need to listen to his coach.

Those reasons for Kirkland underperforming are all well and good, but they don't really explain why this guy went into prison sturdy as a tank and came out with Derrick Gainer's chin. That's the mystery we might never solve. It's like trying to figure out what Ferdie Pacheco is talking about. You can waste a lot of time thinking about it and never get anywhere.

It's kind of amazing that two years ago, Kirkland and Alfredo Angulo were the baddest junior middleweights on the planet, and every fight fan would have sacrificed a pinky toe to see that slugfest. Now one looks like a shot fighter, and the other has to hide under a bale of hay in a pickup truck to get over the US border. Kirkland vs. Angulo was a fight that didn't make sense yet, everyone told us. "You have to wait until they have titles and build up to it," they insisted.

Let's all take a lesson from this: Sometimes, when a fight is hot, it's okay to just *make the freakin' fight*. If it's a good fight, they can do it again for bigger money next time. Yes, somebody will probably lose, but one loss isn't the end of the world. Manny Pacquiao has three of them, and does anybody (other than Floyd Mayweather) care? There's some phrase that applies here about birds and bushes and a gift horse's mouth. And if the people managing Kirkland and Angulo had heeded that phrase, at least they would have made a little money before everything fell apart.

Look, Angulo's career is still promising. He might be allowed to fight in the U.S. again soon, and, even if he never is, the Baggapalooza will let you in on a little secret: You can have boxing matches in other countries. Mexico is one of those countries that permits boxing to take place.

And Kirkland's career isn't over yet either. He looks like a disaster now, but, if Wladimir Klitschko can become a dominant heavyweight champion after the way he lost to Corrie Sanders and Lamon Brewster, anything is possible. That doesn't mean Kirkland is going to be bedding Hayden Panettiere someday. But there are other starlets to choose from; maybe one of the ugly chicks who played a big-haired Ward sister in *The Fighter* would be within his reach.

The point is, who knows what the future holds? The Baggenoodlesoup's only recommendation to Kirkland is that he cover the rest of his body with as many tattoos as possible, so that next time, we'll be able to see some of them no matter which direction he falls.

**REUNITED?**
**Maybe Kirkland should go back to Wolfe**

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

# And The Stingray Goes To ...

Not Ishida. Not Marco Antonio Rubio. Not Orlando Salido. They'd all be worthy in most months, but the Stingray was originally conceived to give exposure to the unexposed (and who knows more about exposure than Jim "Guess What's Under The Trench Coat" Bagg?). So given the choice between high-profile stingers and those who sting in silence, the Baggephantitus is bestowing this month's honor upon Lester Gonzalez, who handed former Olympian and red-hot prospect Bastie Samir an unexpected six-round draw in April.

Samir, a Ghanaian fighter hailed by many as having the most "pro ready" style of anyone who fought in the Beijing Olympics, came into this contest with a perfect 10-0 (10) record and wasn't expected to have much difficulty with Gonzalez, who entered the fight a ho-hum 11-3-1 (6). But here's a funny thing about that 11-3-1 record: It once read 10-0 also. Then Gonzalez suffered a draw in his 11th fight. And he came into the Samir fight on a three-bout losing streak. The Baggalaureate isn't saying the same fate awaits Samir—but against Cuban defector Gonzalez, he sure didn't look like a future superstar. One judge had it 58-56 for Samir; another had it 58-56 for Gonzalez, and the third had it 57-57.

No, Gonzalez didn't get the win. And he didn't get the accolades that Ishida, Rubio, and Salido got. But he gets a Stingray certificate. The Old BaggDonald just has to remember which pocket of his trench coat he put it in.

**SAMIR STUNG** Gonzalez (right) holds Ghanaian to a draw

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

# Notable Quotables

Boxing has always delivered iconic catch phrases: "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!" "Down goes Frazier!" "He can run, but he can't hide." "You're blowin' it, son!" And so forth.

In the past year or so, the sport has really been on a hot streak with memorable sound bites. So this month, His Royal Baggyness is going to make "Hitting On The Break" interactive and make a game out of them. The Baggformer will tell you the recently invented catch phrase, and you get to multiple-choice guess who said it. If you get them all correct, you win a no-expenses-paid trip to the next WBC convention and a bottle of Jose Sulaiman's new cologne, "Stench In Recess."

**Question 1:**
**Who said, "What are you looking at?"**

a) Michael Katsidis, attempting to trash talk Robert Guerrero before the opening bell

b) Erik Morales' right eye, asking Erik Morales' left eye for updates

c) The entire boxing world to Harold Lederman at the end of every HBO fight

d) Paulie Malignaggi to all of the fans checking their Blackberry phones by the second round of his fights

# THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

**Well, Gil Clancy is gone. And you know what that means: The Bagg-a-donuts is the undisputed crankiest old fart in boxing! RIP, Gil. At least you don't have to interact with whack-job fight fans anymore, the way the Bagglin' Oat Bran does via e-mail on a monthly basis:**

**Old Dirty Baggstard,**

**Is it just me? For years, I was a Floyd Mayweather hater, through and through. I didn't like how he ducked Miguel Cotto or Antonio Margarito, thought he was classless, and I hated him the most for the way he clowned Arturo Gatti in their fight.**

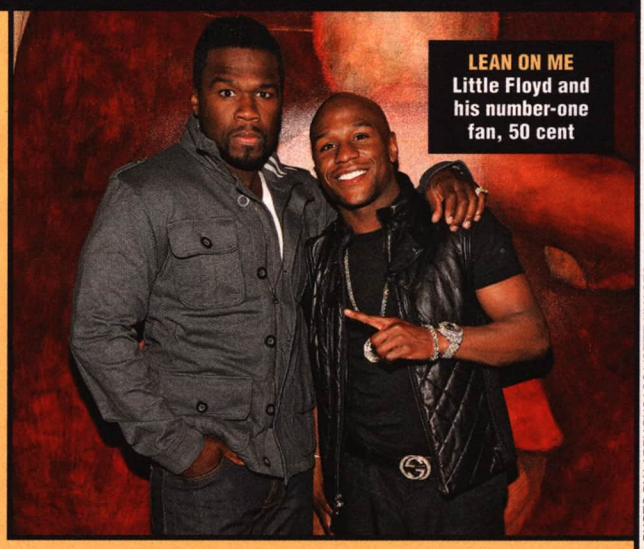
**But over the last two years, I have come the full 180, and Mayweather is now my favorite "active" fighter. Not just because of his amazing and impregnable defensive style, but also just as much because of the way he is continuously scrutinized, lambasted, and dragged through the mud by the boxing media.**

**Don't get me wrong, most of the criticism is justified. I just get tired of having it jammed down my throat every time I pick up a mag or listen to online boxing radio. It seems a bit much, especially for a guy who rarely even fights, and especially in a sport like boxing, where there are plenty of questionable characters and long rap sheets to go around.**

**All of this, while boxing journalists spend every inch of print, and every moment of air time, to fight like little girls at a Justin Beiber concert for the first chance to kiss the ass of Manny Pacquiao. Well, I'm sick of hearing about how great he is. As far as I'm concerned, most of his biggest fights have had every bit the benefit of shrewd matchmaking as Mayweather's have. And I'm not sold on anything: The fact that Pac has skyrocketed through weight divisions in recent years, all the while sustaining punch resistance and knocking people out, has me wondering if there were other reasons he was "superstitious" of blood testing.**

**This whole phenomenon reminds me of Barry Bonds and Michael Vick, two athletes the media reminded me every day to hate—until I got so tired of it, I became their fans.**

**—Rick Rack**



**LEAN ON ME**
**Little Floyd and his number-one fan, 50 cent**

PHOTO BY LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES

Old Dirty Rackstard,

Never let it be said that the Baggapotamus doesn't allow readers to express contrarian views in his column. And you, Rick, are the classic contrarian, the guy who can't help but hate everything that the masses love. You're like that guy who "discovers" a new rock band and loves them until they have a hit and everybody loves them, and then you decide they've sold out and their music stinks even though their music hasn't actually changed at all.

Hey, the world needs rebels. But it wouldn't kill you to *think* before you rebel. Does it really give you pleasure to root for a guy who never fights and a guy who isn't interested in taking the most compelling fights available to him? And while Pacquiao has indeed been matched as carefully for the last year or so as Mayweather ever was, don't lose sight of how many times he won fights as an underdog over the course of his career. Lehlo Ledwaba, Marco Antonio Barrera, the second Erik Morales fight, and Oscar De La Hoya—Pac-Man was supposed to lose all of those. And he's had three or four more fights that were perceived as toss-ups.

If you want to call Pacquiao overrated and Mayweather underrated, that's up to you. But as a contrarian's contrarian, it's only a matter of time until you get sick of your own opinions and start loving Pacquiao and hating Mayweather again. As Baggfucious says, you are not truly capable of hating others until first you learn to hate yourself.

**Question 2:**
**Who said, "Bang! Bang! Bang!"?**

a) Jim Lampley, watching an offensive explosion from Manny Pacquiao

b) Floyd Mayweather Sr., getting lazier with his poetry and just rhyming one word with itself over and over

c) Col. Bob Sheridan, providing the blow-by-blow as the buttons pop off his shirt and strike innocent bystanders

d) Brandon Rios, doing an impression of Freddie Roach playing "Operation"

**Question 3:**
**Who said, "Take the test!"?**

a) Jean Pascal to Bernard Hopkins at a recent press conference

b) Willie Savannah, shouting encouragement to Juan Diaz as he takes the bar exam

c) Deontay Wilder to Demetrius Andrade, encouraging his Olympic teammate to step up and fight somebody with a pulse

d) Demetrius Andrade to Deontay Wilder, encouraging his Olympic teammate to step up and fight somebody with a pulse

**Question 4:**
**Who said, "There were no negotiations"?**

a) Leonard Ellerbe in regard to the alleged (and confirmed by everybody but him) negotiations for a Pacquiao-Mayweather fight

b) Roger Mayweather, repeating the party line to keep his job as his nephew's trainer

c) Michael Buffer, when asked how much the devil got for his soul

d) Nigel Collins, explaining how the Baggadillo's attempt to negotiate a raise for writing this column went ■

***Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.***

By Lee Groves

# Another Brit To Test "Canelo"

For the past two decades, every Mexican fighter with superstar potential has been compared to **Julio Cesar Chavez**, considered by many the best his nation ever produced. Some, such as **Marco Antonio Barrera**, **Erik Morales**, **Ricardo Lopez**, and **Juan Manuel Marquez**, managed to emerge from Chavez' shadow to establish their own personas and Hall-of-Fame credentials. Countless others, however, were destroyed by the hype, the pressures of perfection, and the expectations game that Chavez mastered over his 25-year career.

On June 18, just six days after "J.C. Superstar" is inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, junior middleweight **Saul Alvarez** will risk an alphabet strap against Englishman **Ryan Rhodes** in Guadalajara, Mexico. For "Canelo," the similarities to Chavez in terms of style, temperament, and career path are striking. Consider:

- Both experienced success despite being boys among men (Chavez turned pro at 17, Alvarez at 15). Incidentally, Chavez' birthday is July 12 (1962) while Alvarez' is July 18 (1990).
- At fight time, Alvarez will be 20 years, 340 days old with a 36-0-1 (26) record. At the same age, Chavez was 37-0 (32) and three days away from stopping **Ramiro Sandoval** in two rounds.
- Like Chavez, Alvarez prefers to walk down opponents before unleashing a methodical, heavy-handed attack that grinds adversaries to dust. Constant pressure and pinpoint accuracy account for most of their stoppages though, every so often (**Meldrick Taylor I** for Chavez; **Carlos Baldomir** for Alvarez), they summon spectacular displays of power.
- Gaining prominence in the US had no effect on their active fight schedules. During Chavez' title-fight arc (September 1984 to July 2000), Chavez logged 67 bouts, including 22 in Mexico. Of those, 16 were non-title engagements specifically designed to allow his most passionate fans to see him live. Meanwhile, Alvarez has averaged one fight every 1.78 months and is competing for the fifth time since igniting American interest with his ninth-round TKO of **Jose Miguel Cotto** on the **Floyd Mayweather-Shane Mosley** undercard 13 months ago. Subsequently, Alvarez bouts have alternated between the US and Mexico in order to build his brand.

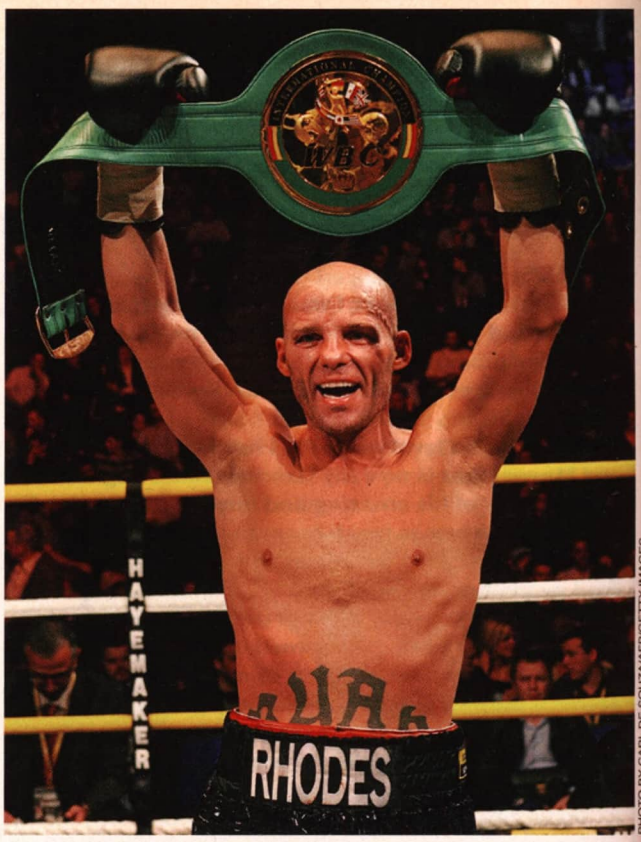



PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**COMING TO WIN**
**Can European and British titleholder Rhodes derail Alvarez?**

Lost in the shadows is Rhodes, a 34-year-old veteran who is enjoying a late-career renaissance similar to that experienced by another southpaw—Scotland's Jim Watt. Since losing a 12-rounder to Gary Lockett in July 2006, the onetime "Spice Boy" has won 10 straight, including eight by knockout, and seized the British and European titles from **Gary Woolcombe** (KO 9) and **Jamie Moore** (KO 7), respectively. His last fight was a two-round blast out of previously undefeated **Rocky Junior** last December, which raised his record to 45-4 (31).

Rhodes' left-handedness, mobility, occasional switch-hitting, sticky bodypunching, and dangerous straight left will test Alvarez, who is still an evolving product despite the fame, magazine covers, and gossip column citations.

If Alvarez hopes to earn Chavez-like immortality, he must defeat men like Rhodes impressively. Rhodes' low-held right may provide him that opportunity, and, given Alvarez' dominant but sometimes dull decision over Briton Matthew Hatton in March, Alvarez needs to produce a fresh reminder of why so many are so excited about him. ■

## LISTEN UP

On June 11 in Johannesburg, South Africa, IBF super featherweight titleholder **Mzonke Fana**, 30-4 (12) will make the first defense of his second reign, against Brooklyn-based Dominican **Argenis Mendez**, 18-1 (9). Both are coming off decisions over ex-titlist **Cassius Baloyi**—Fana's to win the vacant IBF strap last September and Mendez' in an elimination bout in January … The seemingly endless string of outstanding matches at 140 continues June 25 when **Devon Alexander**, 21-1 (13), meets **Lucas Matthysse**, 28-1 (26). Alexander hopes to rebound from his disappointing 10th-round technical decision loss to **Timothy Bradley** while Matthysse, who dropped a disputed nod to **Zab Judah** last November, is coming off an eighth-round TKO over another slick southpaw in **DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley** … Another crossroads fight will unfold July 20 at the Sydney (Australia) Entertainment center when **Danny Green**, 31-3 (27), who reignited his career with a one-round kayo over **Roy Jones**, meets Jones' two-time conqueror **Antonio Tarver**, 28-6 (19), at cruiserweight. The combatants' combined ages: 80 (Green 38, Tarver 42).

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